

MYSTERY MEN



THE GOLDEN AGE

DAVID LISS • PATCH ZIRCHER • JASON ARMSTRONG

MARVEL

MYSTERY MEN



THE
GOLDEN
AGE

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THE GOLDEN AGE

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MYSTERY MEN #1–5

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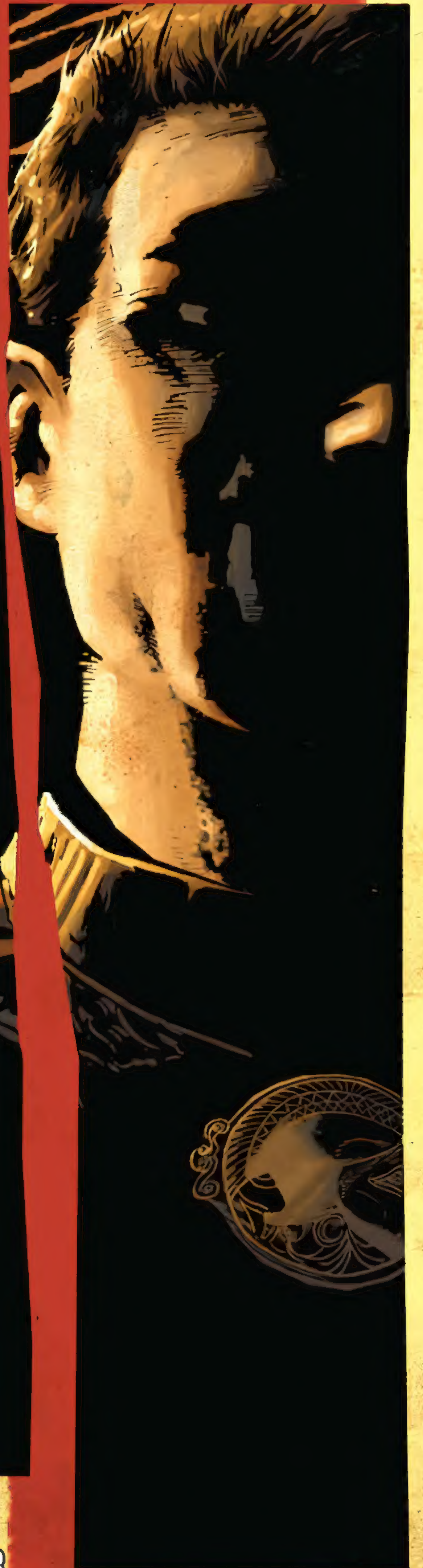
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**WHO
ARE
THE**

MYSTERY MEN



**DAVID LISS
PATRICK ZIRCHER
ANDY TROY**

MARVEL
LIMITED SERIES
1 of 5

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□ NEW YORK CITY, 1932 □

Maybe I'm not the most law-abiding citizen around.



This--this *Depression*, they're calling it--is *crushing* those people down there on the street.

But up here in the *penthouses*, it's jewels and champagne.



You can't tell me that's right.

So my little capers...



...well, let's just say I have no trouble sleeping at night.









I HOPE
I DIDN'T
KEEP YOU
WAITING.

NOT AT
ALL, MY
DEAR.

I CAN'T THANK
YOU ENOUGH FOR
ALL YOU'VE OFFERED
TO DO FOR ME.



I AM DOING
NOTHING MORE
THAN BRINGING
TWO TALENTED
FRIENDS
TOGETHER.

TRULY, THE
PLEASURE
IS MINE.



WH-WHERE DID
ALICE GO? SHE WAS
HERE A MINUTE AGO,
WASN'T SHE?

THOUGHT
SHE WAS...
BUT I CAN'T
REMEMBER.

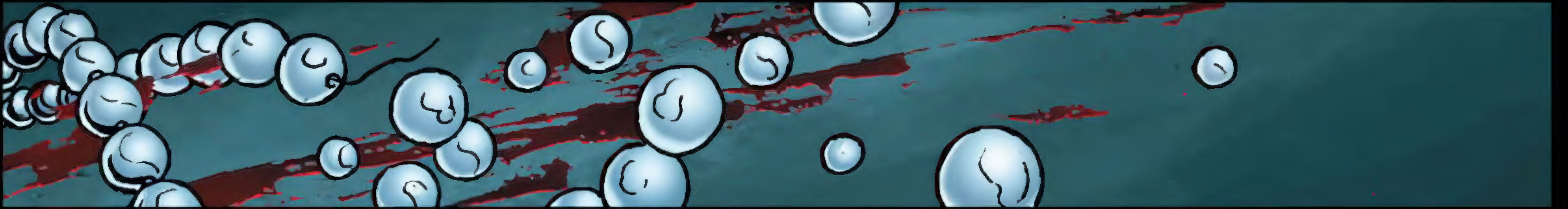
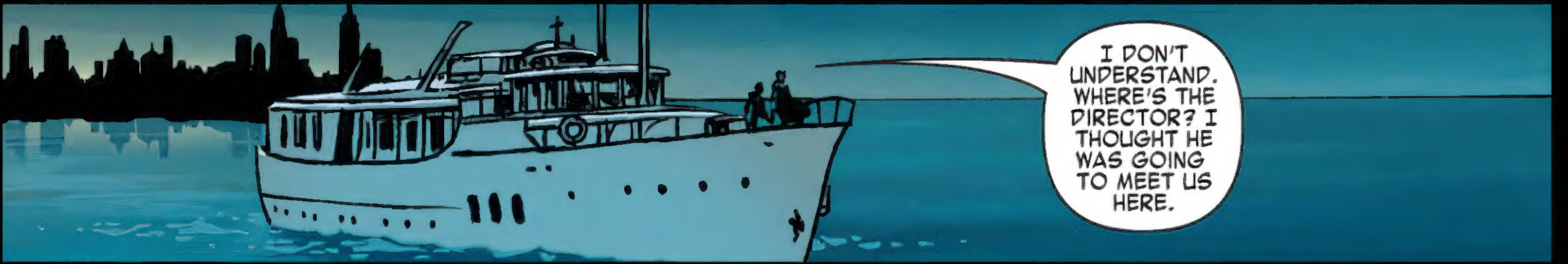


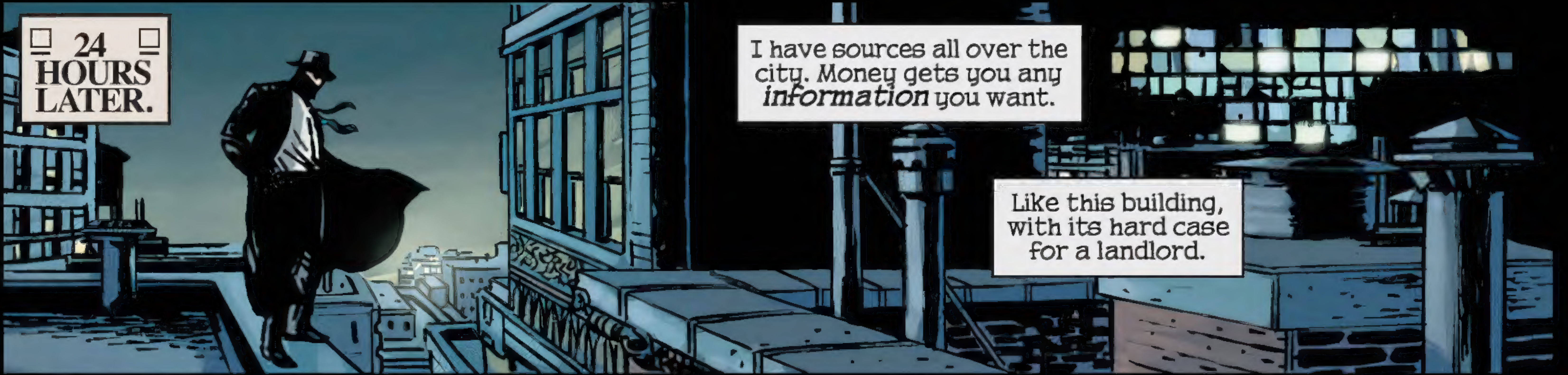
ARE YOU SURE
THIS DIRECTOR OF
YOURS DOESN'T HAVE
ANY FUNNY IDEAS?
BECAUSE I CAN'T
DO THAT.

I'M IN
LOVE WITH
DENNIS.

I WOULD NEVER
BRING YOU IF I HAD
ANY DOUBTS. YOU
ARE SAFE WITH ME.
YOU KNOW THAT.

I...
I DO.





24
HOURS
LATER.

I have sources all over the city. Money gets you any information you want.

Like this building, with its hard case for a landlord.



Six tenants to be *evicted* at the end of the month if they don't come up with the rent--which the landlord jacked up.

Half the people in the city are out of work. Where does this bird think he's going to find new tenants?



No one is getting evicted this month.



REVENANT STRIKES AGAIN: WHO IS THIS MYSTERY MAN??

Alice Starr

BROADWAY ACTRESS FOUND DEAD ON BEACH



□ THE NEXT DAY. □

I don't remember
a whole lot after
I saw that paper.

I don't *want* to remember.
I don't want to *know*.



**KNOCK
KNOCK
KNOCK**



WE
UNDERSTAND
YOU KNEW THAT
BROADWAY SKIRT,
ALICE STARR.
KNEW HER **PRETTY
WELL**.



AIN'T THAT
WHAT THEY SAY,
BARTLETT?



THAT'S
WHAT THEY
SAY.

HEY, TAYLOR.
DON'T YOU THINK
THINGS LOOK **PRETTY
ROUGH** IN HERE? MAYBE
PIPER HERE IS FEELING
GUILTY ABOUT
SOMETHING.



I KNOW THE
STORY, PIPER. YOUR
FATHER'S GOT FRIENDS
IN HIGH PLACES AND
YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO
BE **OFF-LIMITS**.

BUT MAYBE
THAT'S NOT SO
TRUE ANYMORE.
MAYBE DADDY'S
CUT YOU
LOOSE.

YOU FIND
WHO KILLED
HER?



HEY, TAYLOR.
HE WANTS TO
KNOW IF WE
FOUND THE
MURDERER.

BUT YOU
KNOW WHAT?
I THINK WE
JUST DID.

That stench in the air is the smell of *burning bridges*.

There's no going back.

Sometimes you make your mistakes with your eyes wide *open*.

Sometimes you don't have a *choice*.

Nowhere to go but forward. All the way.

They *pushed* me to this.

TIME TO START SINGING.

Now I was going to push *back*.

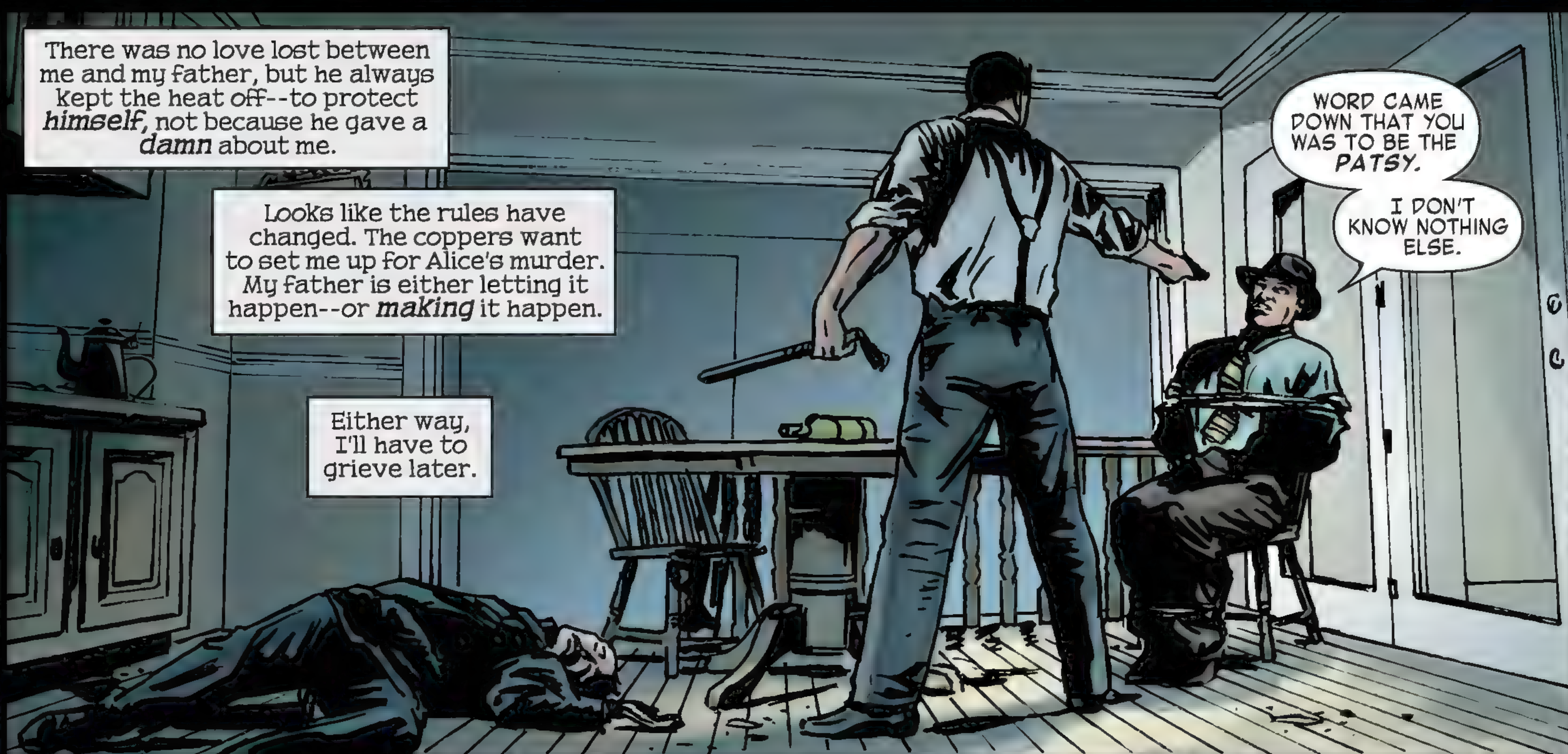
There was no love lost between me and my father, but he always kept the heat off--to protect *himself*, not because he gave a *damn* about me.

Looks like the rules have changed. The coppers want to set me up for Alice's murder. My father is either letting it happen--or *making* it happen.

Either way, I'll have to grieve later.

WORD CAME DOWN THAT YOU WAS TO BE THE PATSY.

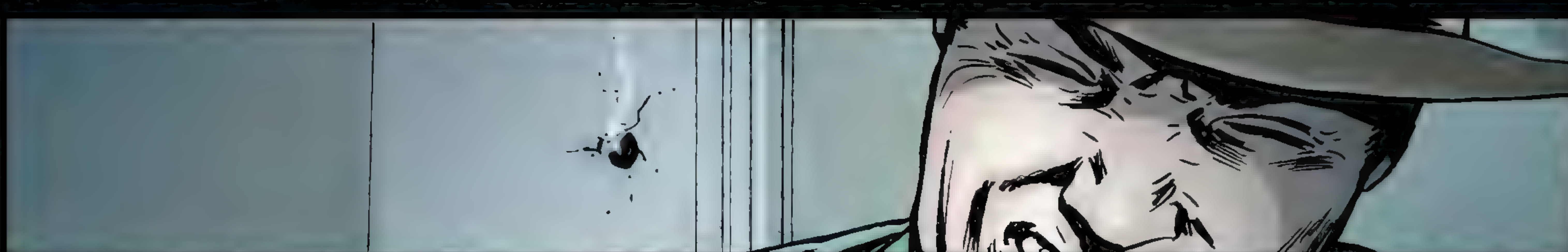
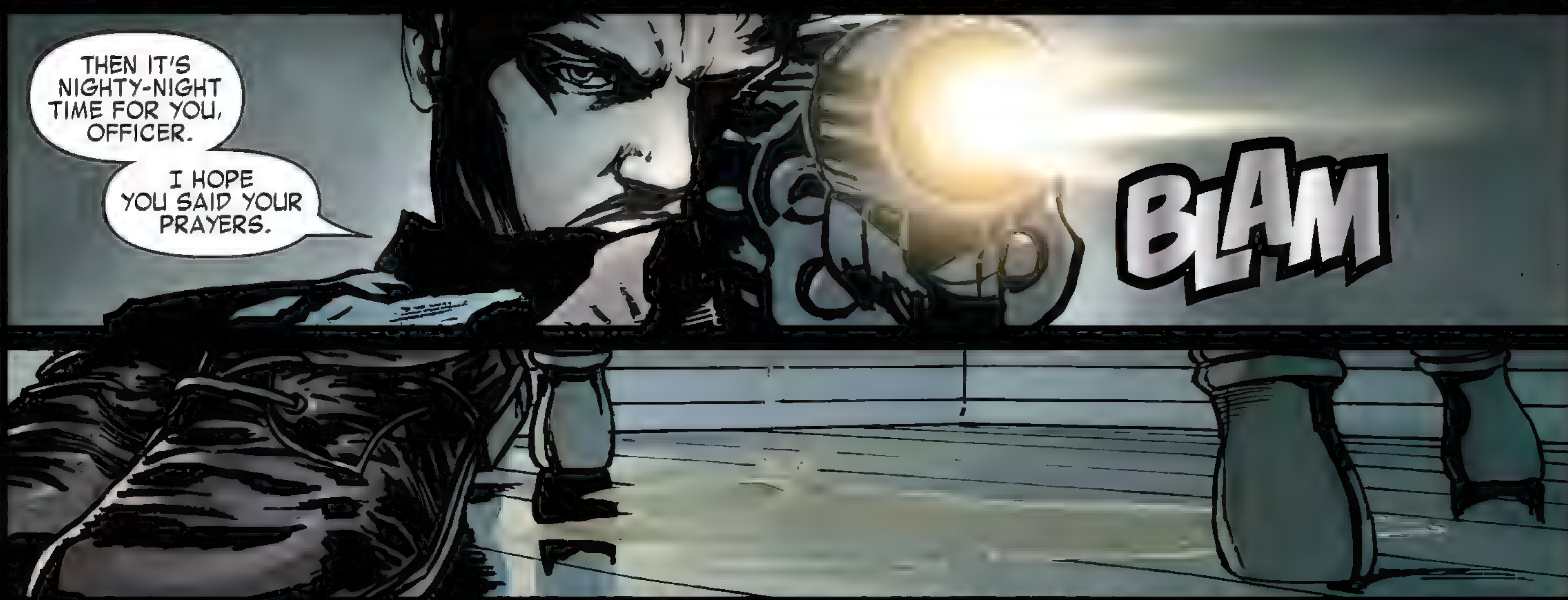
I DON'T KNOW NOTHING ELSE.



THEN IT'S NIGHTY-NIGHT TIME FOR YOU, OFFICER.

I HOPE YOU SAID YOUR PRAYERS.

BLAM



JEEZ, BARTLETT. I ALWAYS FIGURED IF ONE OF US WET HIS PANTS IN THE LINE OF DUTY, IT WOULD BE ME.

I FEEL VERY RELIEVED, SO TO SPEAK.



More cops on the street, so the front door isn't an option.

I always had a plan in case I needed to lam off, but I'd rather be *dead* than need it for *this*.

But I wasn't dead, and Alice *was*. They should've killed *me* too.

They'd *see* that soon enough.





GENTLEMEN.
MADAM.

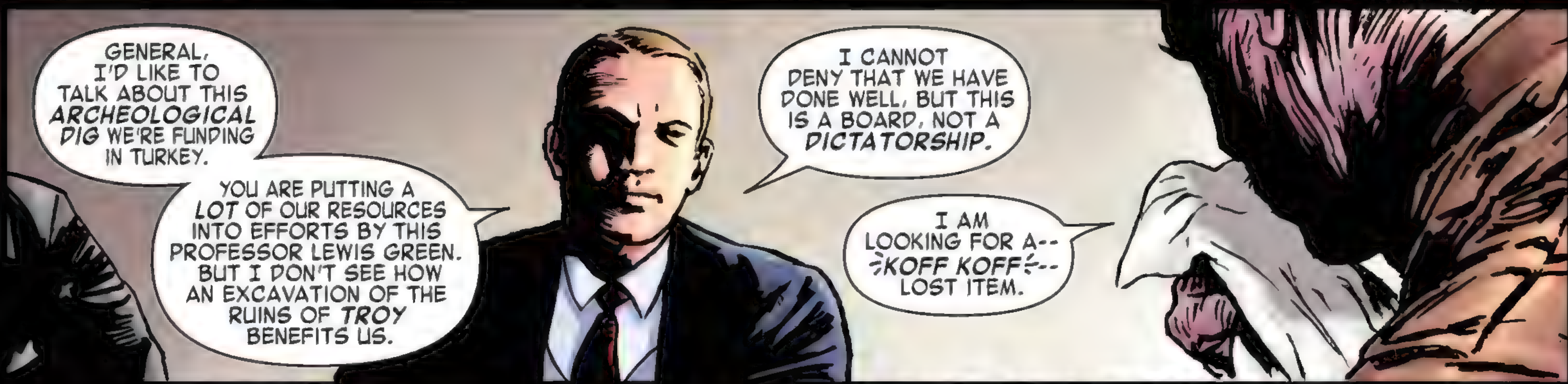
THE COUNTRY
IS IN ECONOMIC
CHAOS, AND WE
CONTINUE TO
THRIVE.

THE MINING
OPERATIONS IN WEST
VIRGINIA, THE ELECTIONS
WE CONTROLLED, THE
POLICE DEPARTMENTS AND
LOCAL GOVERNMENTS THAT
WE OWN, THE UNIONS
WE'VE PUT DOWN.

OUR MOVE
INTO THE NARCOTICS
TRADE HAS PROVED MOST
PROFITABLE, AS HAVE OUR
EFFORTS TO AUGMENT THE
AMOUNT OF NICOTINE
IN CIGARETTES.

THE NEWLY OPENED
EMPIRE STATE BUILDING.

AND YET
I SENSE YOUR
UNHAPPINESS.



GENERAL,
I'D LIKE TO
TALK ABOUT THIS
ARCHEOLOGICAL
DIG WE'RE FUNDING
IN TURKEY.

YOU ARE PUTTING A
LOT OF OUR RESOURCES
INTO EFFORTS BY THIS
PROFESSOR LEWIS GREEN.
BUT I DON'T SEE HOW
AN EXCAVATION OF THE
RUINS OF TROY
BENEFITS US.

I CANNOT
DENY THAT WE HAVE
DONE WELL, BUT THIS
IS A BOARD, NOT A
DICTATORSHIP.

I AM
LOOKING FOR A--
KOFF KOFF--
LOST ITEM.



AND WHEN I
FIND IT, IT WILL
CHANGE EVERYTHING.
YOU MAY ALL DEPEND
UPON IT.

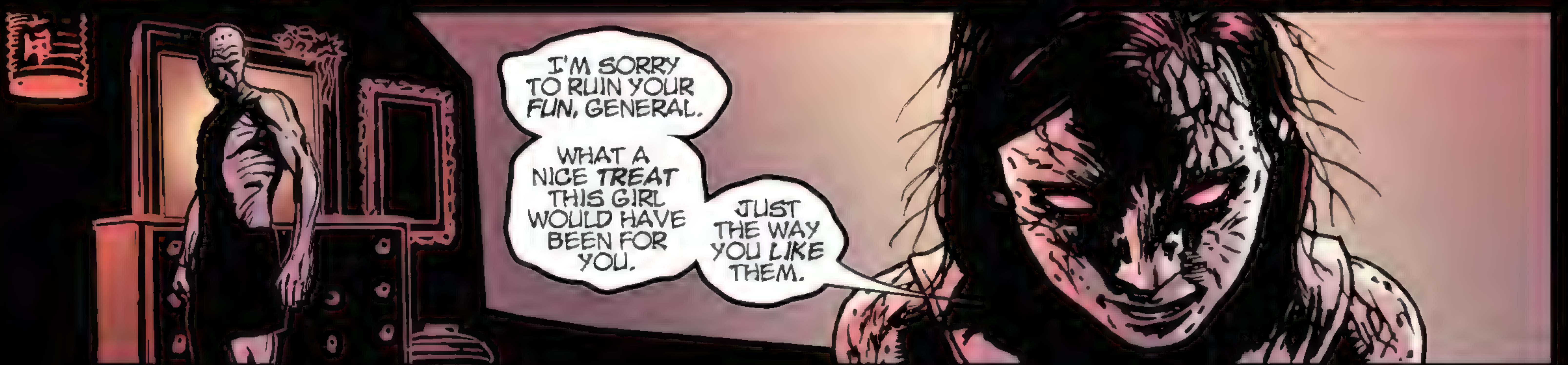
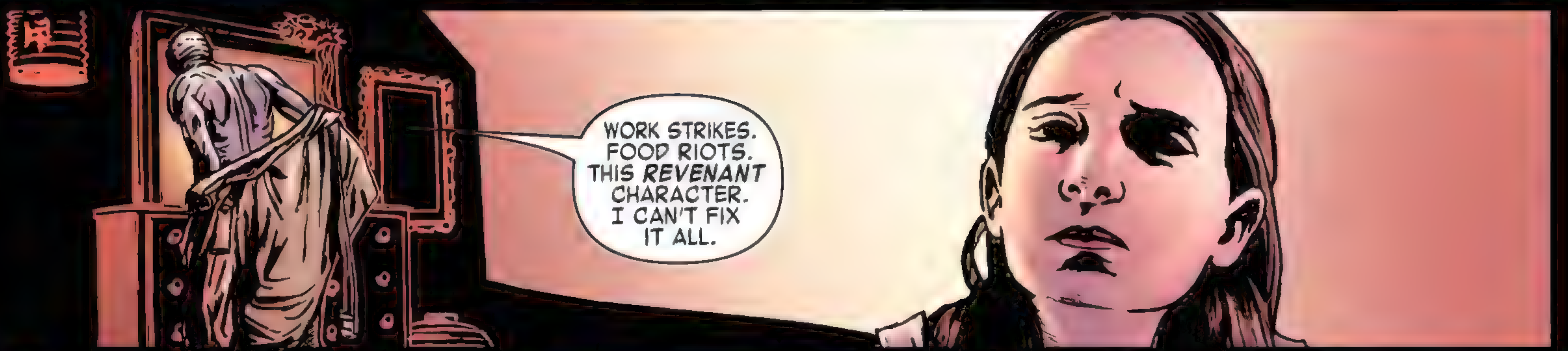
I HAVE LED
YOU THUS FAR AND
YOU WILL TRUST ME
ON THIS.

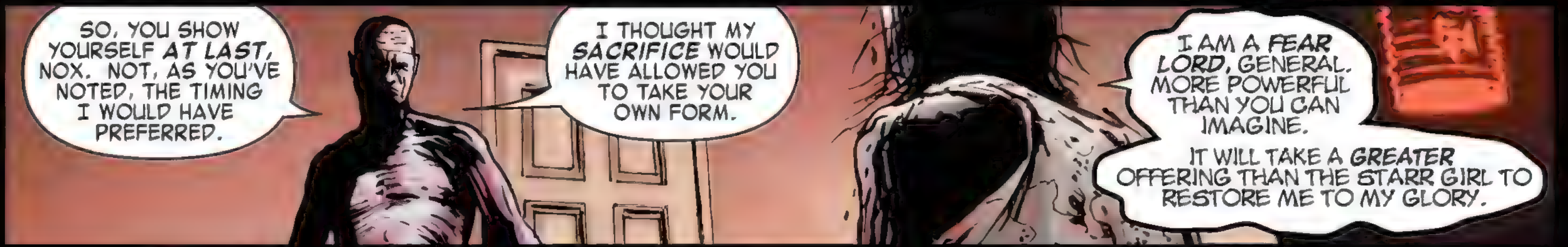


AND NOW,
GENTLEMEN,
LADY. YOU WILL
EXCUSE ME.



KOFF
KOFF
KOFF





SO, YOU SHOW YOURSELF AT LAST, NOX. NOT, AS YOU'VE NOTED, THE TIMING I WOULD HAVE PREFERRED.

I THOUGHT MY SACRIFICE WOULD HAVE ALLOWED YOU TO TAKE YOUR OWN FORM.

I AM A FEAR LORD, GENERAL. MORE POWERFUL THAN YOU CAN IMAGINE.
IT WILL TAKE A GREATER OFFERING THAN THE STARR GIRL TO RESTORE ME TO MY GLORY.

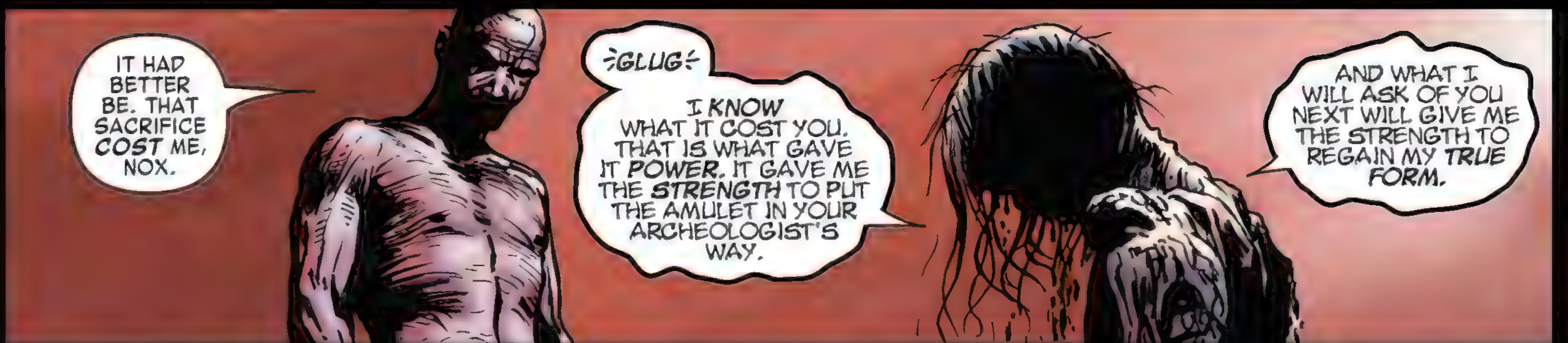


I HAVE ALREADY DONE MUCH FOR YOU WITH MY LITTLE CHARM. THE LADIES FIND YOU AGREEABLE, DO THEY NOT? THEY SEE YOU AS YOU WISH THEM TO...NOT AS YOU ARE.

BUT YOU TOO HAVE DONE MUCH, AND I SHALL HONOR MY BARGAIN.

THE AMULET YOU SEEK IN THE RUINS OF TROY.

IT SHALL SOON BE YOURS.



IT HAD BETTER BE. THAT SACRIFICE COST ME, NOX.

~GLUG~

I KNOW WHAT IT COST YOU. THAT IS WHAT GAVE IT POWER. IT GAVE ME THE STRENGTH TO PUT THE AMULET IN YOUR ARCHEOLOGIST'S WAY.

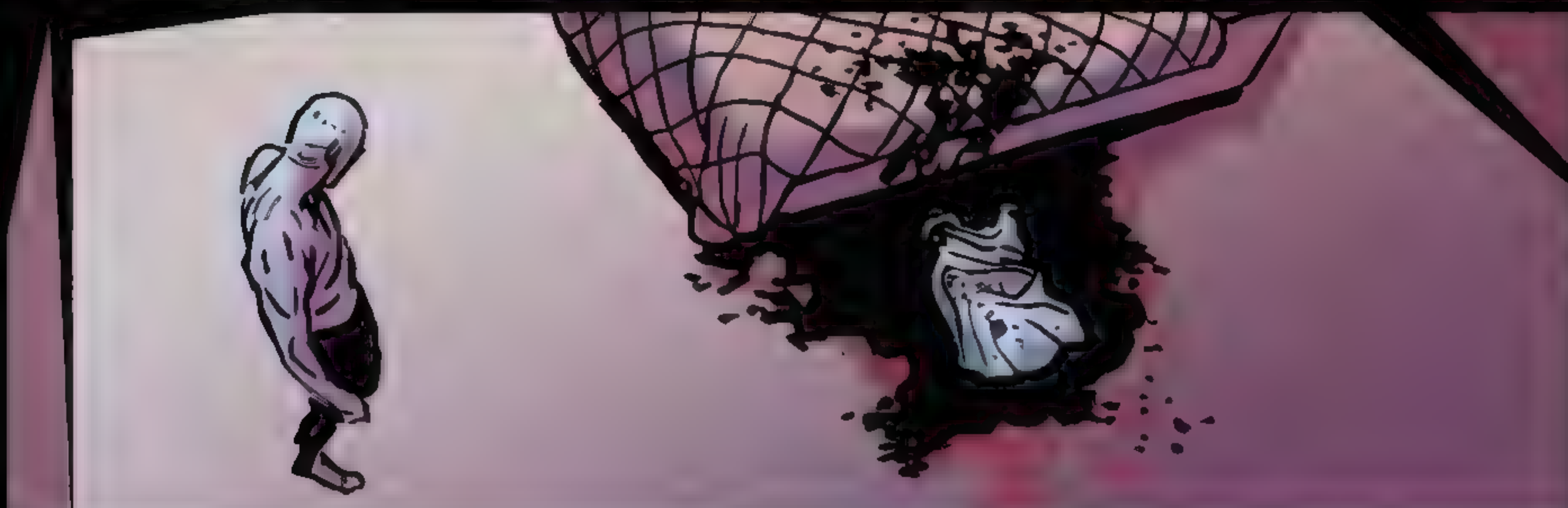
AND WHAT I WILL ASK OF YOU NEXT WILL GIVE ME THE STRENGTH TO REGAIN MY TRUE FORM.



YOUR EARLIER SACRIFICE PAINED THIS CITY, GENERAL.

WHAT I ASK NEXT WILL WOUND THE ENTIRE NATION.

~GLUG~





I'd put a lot of deposits into the favor bank over the years, and it was time to start making *withdrawals*.

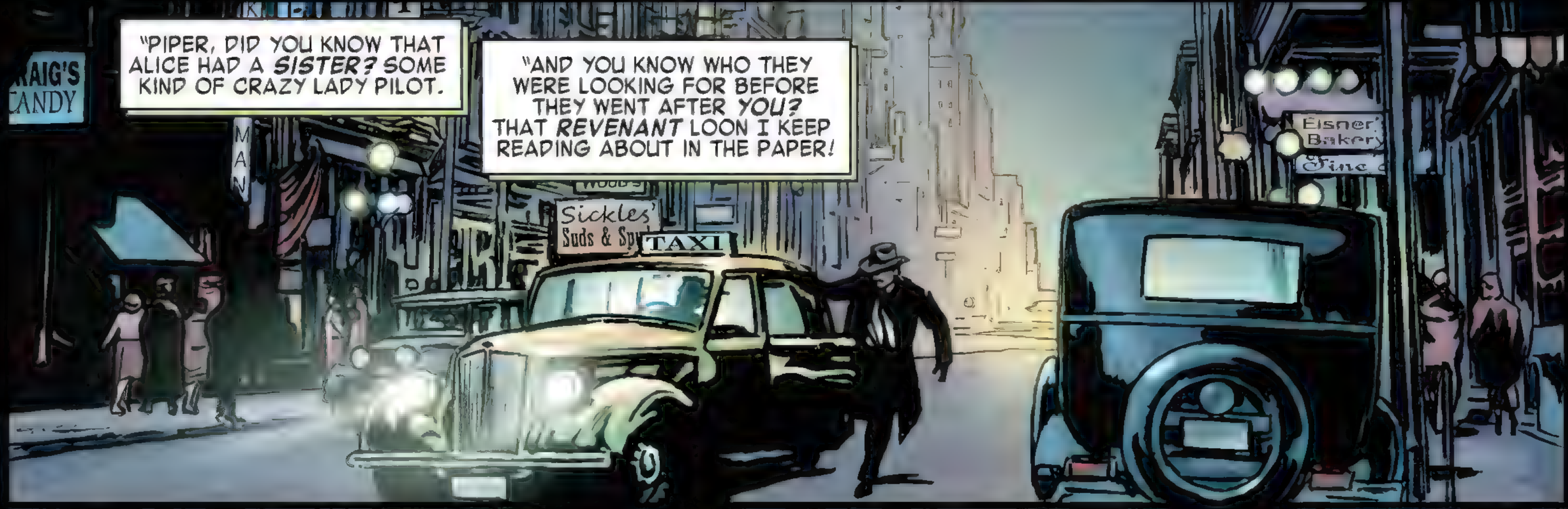
Like from *Haskell Smith*, a shamus I'd helped out of a jam once or twice.

PIPER, I WISH I KNEW WHAT TO SAY, PAL.

I NEED HELP, HASKELL. THE COPS WANT TO PIN THIS ON ME.

I HEARD THE NEWS, AND I'M ON TOP OF IT.

GET ON OVER TO MY OFFICE. I ALREADY HAVE A WIRE ON THIS.



"PIPER, DID YOU KNOW THAT ALICE HAD A *SISTER*? SOME KIND OF CRAZY LADY PILOT.

"AND YOU KNOW WHO THEY WERE LOOKING FOR BEFORE THEY WENT AFTER YOU? THAT *REVENANT* LOON I KEEP READING ABOUT IN THE PAPER!



"I'LL SPILL MORE WHEN YOU GET HERE."





They croaked Haskell to shut him up, the poor stiff. But that meant he'd discovered *something*. Something about Alice's sister.

And he'd left notes about an air-field out in Queens, the one where the amusement park used to be.



LOOKS LIKE PIPER BLIPPED OFF ANOTHER ONE, FELLAS.



GOTCHA NOW, RICH BOY.



Not my fault they leave these
cop cars just sitting around.
It's like an invitation to take one.

And this *Revenant*.
I didn't believe in him
until tonight. For the
moment, though, he
was okay in my book.

Haskell's notes said
Alice's sister, *Sarah*,
is renting this hangar. He
thought she was *living* in
it, kooky as that sounds.

I don't know what else
Smith wrote down in
his office, but the cops
are hot on my trail.

Whatever is going
on, I have to talk
to the sister
and beat it *fast*.

GET
DOWN!

It's not like I
didn't hear her.

And when someone
comes running in
terror, screaming
to get down, chances
are, getting down is
the right thing to do.





It's just that... I didn't know she would look so much like Alice.

It's like looking at a ghost. I can hardly *breathe*.

Also, she's putting a lot of her weight on my chest, so that doesn't help.

IT DIDN'T EXPLODE. HEY MISTER, IT DIDN'T EXPLODE!

DO YOU KNOW WHAT THAT MEANS?

~NNHHFF~ NOT REALLY, NO.

BUT IF YOU COULD GET OFF ME, I'D LOVE TO HEAR ABOUT IT.



THE FUEL HAS GOT TO BE VOLATILE. OF COURSE IT DOES. OTHERWISE, IT'S NOT MUCH GOOD, IS IT?

BUT IT CAN'T BE TOO VOLATILE, OR ELSE IT EXPLODES IN YOUR FACE, AND NO ONE WANTS TO BLOW UP, DO THEY? KNOW WHAT I MEAN?

I'M SURE SOMEONE DOES, BUT IT'S NOT ME.

WAIT ONE MINUTE. WHO ARE YOU? WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?



I'D LIKE TO KNOW WHAT YOU'RE DOING HERE MYSELF.

MY NAME IS DENNIS PIPER. I'M--

JEEPERS! YOU'RE ALICE'S GUY.



YEAH, I WAS.

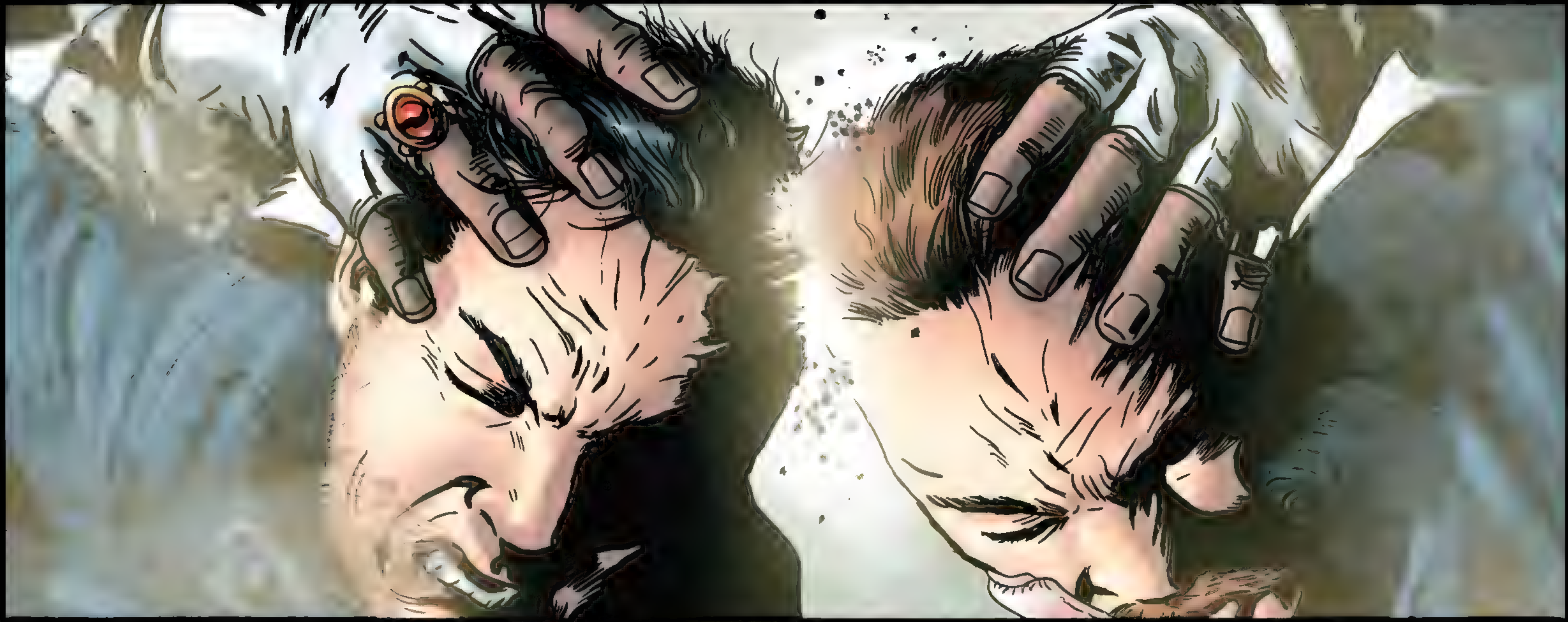
LISTEN, SARAH, THE COPS ARE TRYING TO PIN EVERYTHING ON ME.

A FRIEND OF MINE, A PRIVATE PEEPER, POKED AROUND AND WOUND UP DEAD.

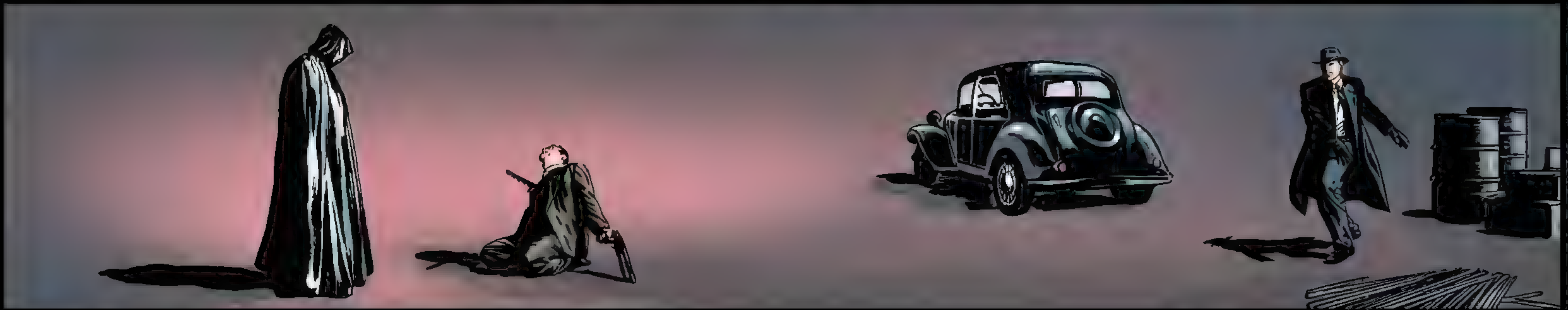
BUT NOT BEFORE HE CAME UP WITH YOUR NAME.











The
OP

DATE	JUNE 08	INVESTIGATOR	DAVID LISS	CASE FILE	MM 001
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I was still very new to writing comics when editor Bill Rosemann asked me if I was interested in writing a miniseries about pulp-era characters set in Marvel continuity. Looking back, I'm glad I was new because if I'd understood what a rare and important opportunity this was, I might have been too intimidated to accept. Creating all-new characters that evoked the pulp aesthetic but also felt like real Marvel heroes, and creating a new chapter in the history of the Marvel U. How cool is that?

Over the course of a few weeks, Bill and I hashed out what kinds of characters we wanted for this book. I thought we had some good ideas, but good ideas aren't enough, and a comic book has to look good. Bill proposed a lot of names as he searched for the right artist, and I would have been thrilled to work with any of them, but when he mentioned Patrick Zircher, I knew he was the person I wanted on this title. If you are reading this, then you are holding the book in your hands, and so you know why. *Mystery Men* is, without doubt, one of the best looking comics out there. Period.

Any story set in the New York of the early 1930s should evoke some of the real issues of the period. The '30s were about more than speakeasies, dirigibles and awesome hats, and so we threw in issues of race and gender inequity, poverty and greed, unfair labor practices, and many other gritty realities of the Depression. We also wanted the book to be set firmly in the Marvel U., so keep your eyes peeled for some familiar names and faces.

It was never anything but a blast to work on a project wedding time-honored archetypes, modern sensibilities, awesome art, and a new chapter in Marvel history. Some things went absolutely according to plan, and some evolved organically during the creative process, but the end result is something I feel lucky to have worked on. I hope you enjoy reading it as much as we enjoyed creating it.

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PATRICK ZIRCHER
ARTIST

ANDY TROY
COLORIST

DAVE SHARPE
LETTERER

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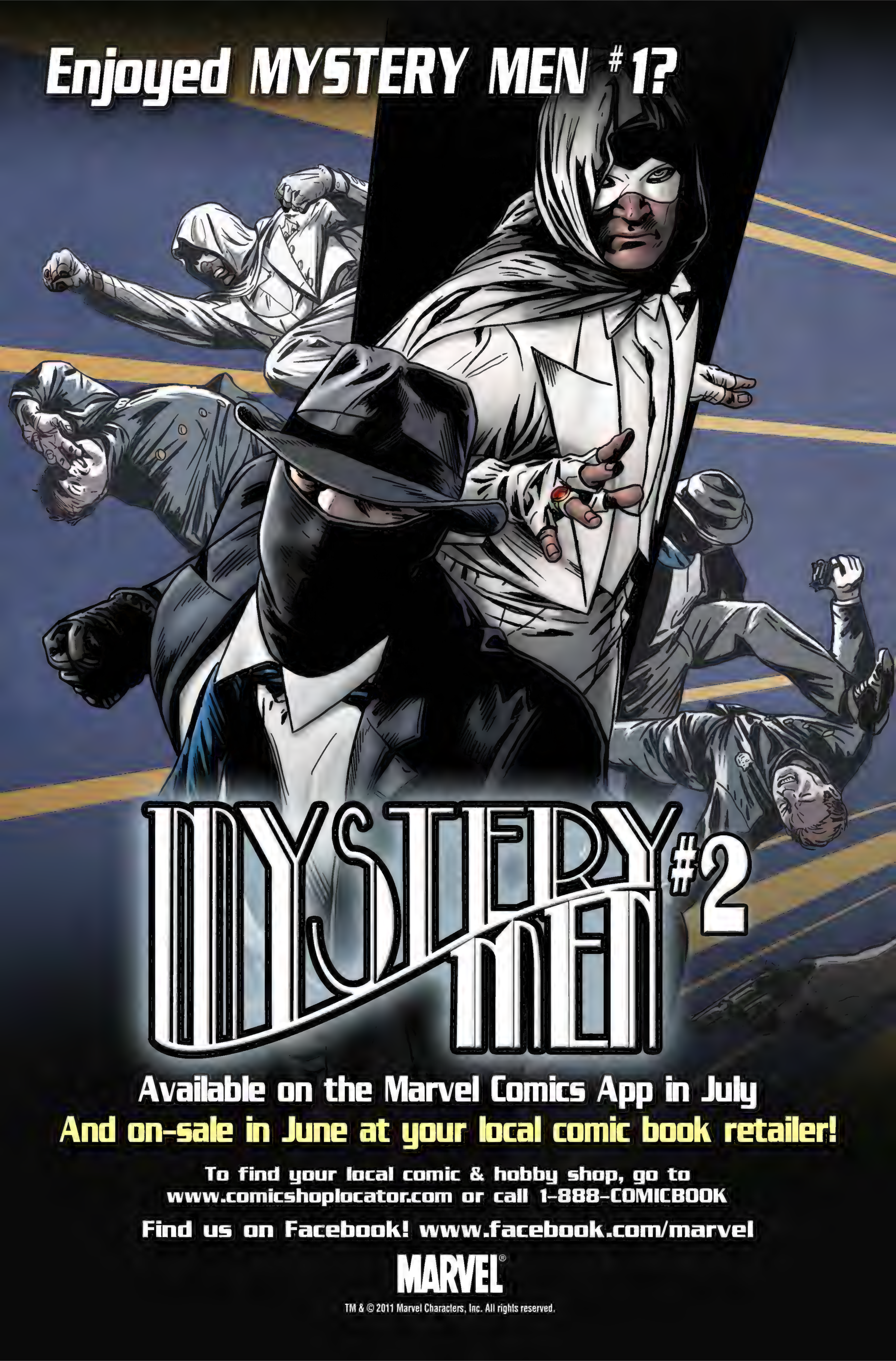
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To try and convey

NEXT ISSUE:



Enjoyed MYSTERY MEN #1?



MYSTERY MEN #2

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MYSTERY MEN

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2 of 5



**DAVID LISS
PATRICK ZIRCHER
ANDY TROY**



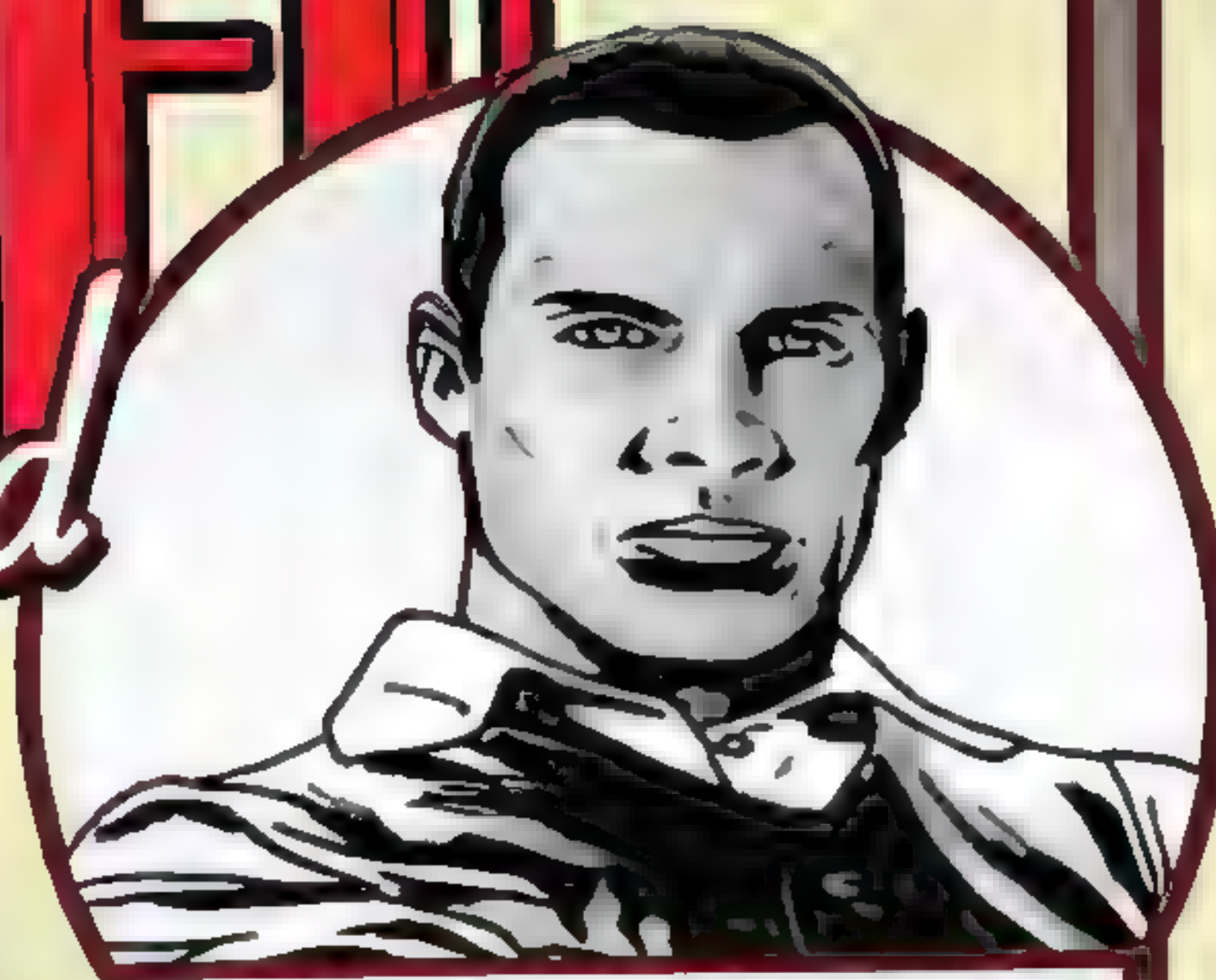
MYSTERY



DENNIS PIPER
AKA
THE OPERATIVE



SARAH STARR



EZEKIEL WRIGHT
AKA
THE REVENANT

Starring and



Last time...

New York City, 1932. The Depression has stirred unrest on every level of society. A man known as the General heads a board of the rich and powerful, controlling the fates of millions. He has made a pact with a demonic fear lord called Nox to use human sacrifices to return the entity to its true form. In return, Nox has offered him power, via the imminent arrival of a unique amulet from an archeological dig in the ruins of Troy.

Meanwhile, Dennis Piper has become the cat thief and vigilante known as The Operative in order to hold the rich accountable for their decadency and misdeeds. But when he's framed for the General's murder of his lover Alice Starr, Piper was forced to evade corrupt cops and prevent Alice's sister Sarah from falling into their hands. Saved from a police execution by the timely arrival of the ghostly Revenant, Piper agreed to team up and find the real killer before more people die...

DAVID LISS

WRITER

&

PATRICK ZIRCHER

ARTIST

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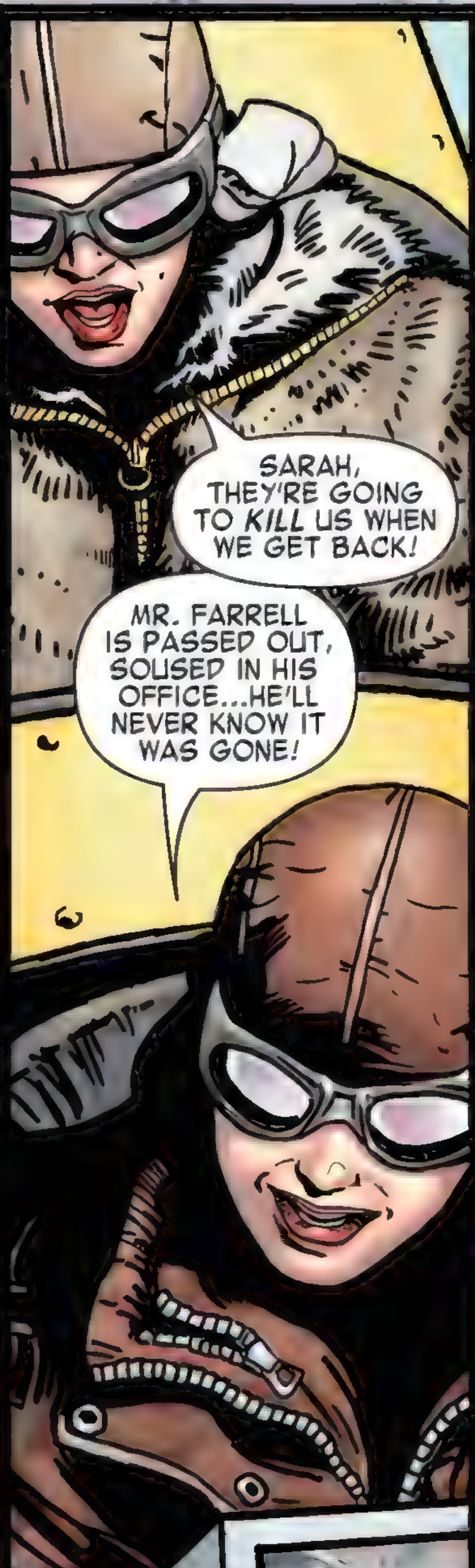
ALAN FINE

EXECUTIVE PRODUCER

All I've ever
wanted was
to *fly*.



I spent my summers trading
odd jobs at the local airstrip
for lessons. And when I couldn't
pay, I *borrowed* a ride.



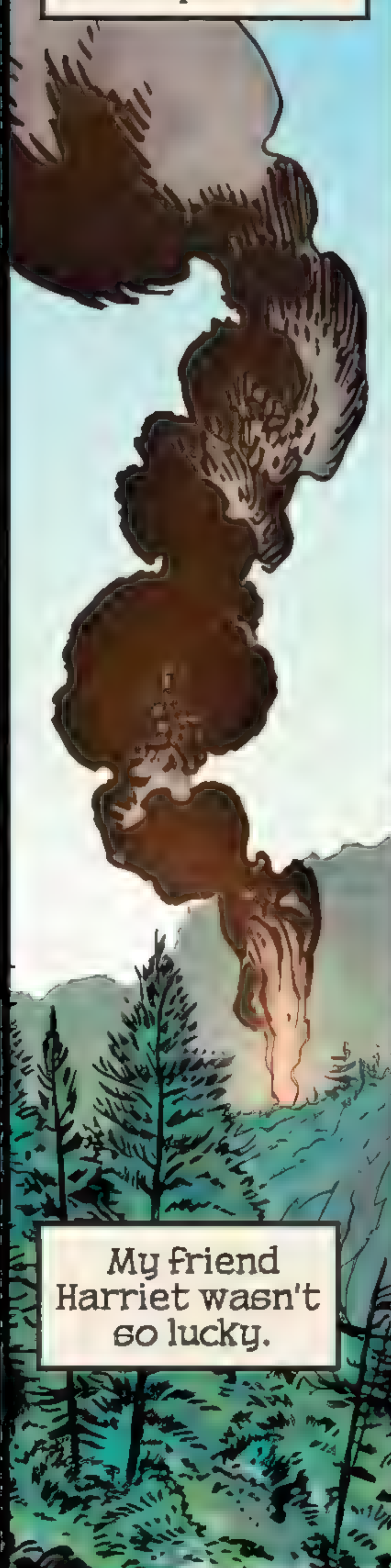
SARAH,
THEY'RE GOING
TO KILL US WHEN
WE GET BACK!

MR. FARRELL
IS PASSED OUT,
SOUSED IN HIS
OFFICE...HE'LL
NEVER KNOW IT
WAS GONE!

Turns out the
plane's owner--
who threw his
money around
on mistresses
and the ponies--
skimped on the
maintenance.



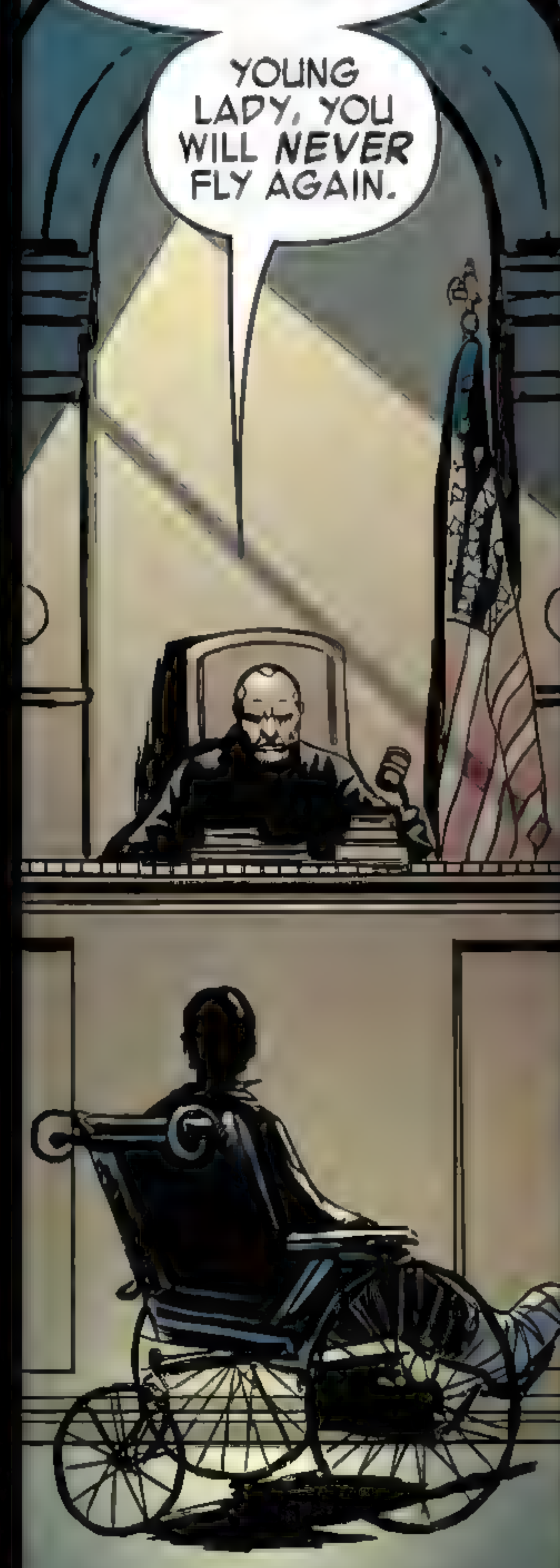
I broke my arm
and both my legs
when we made
impact.



My friend
Harriet wasn't
so lucky.

IT IS THE JUDGMENT
OF THIS COURT THAT
SENTENCE BE SUSPENDED
PROVIDED YOU SIGN
A BINDING AGREEMENT
NEVER AGAIN TO RIDE IN
AN AIRPLANE IN ANY
CAPACITY BUT
PASSENGER.

YOUNG
LADY, YOU
WILL *NEVER*
FLY AGAIN.



I was so
wrapped up in
my *pity* and
guilt, I didn't
consider the
grief of those
left behind.



QUEENS, NEW YORK.
THREE YEARS LATER.

I understand
that grief now.

Alice, my
sister, is dead.
Murdered.

The police
are after me.
To frame me as
the killer? I
don't know.

All I know is that *The
Revenant*, the mystery
man from the papers, and
Alice's beau, *Dennis Piper*--
who apparently likes to
pull on a mask himself--
just saved me from the
crooked coppers.

The crash. The news that
Alice is gone. There are
too many moments like that
in my life...and after this
one, *nothing* is ever going
to be the same.

WHAT'S ALL
THIS TO YOU?
WHY STICK
YOUR NOSE
IN IT?

*EVERY
INJUSTICE* IS THE
CONCERN OF THE
REVENANT.

AND ALICE
STARR WAS MY
FRIEND.

That surprised me,
and I can see Piper
doesn't like it.

YOUR
FRIEND?

COME,
SIR. LET US
NOT SQUABBLE.
WE HAVE *MUCH*
TO DISCUSS
AND PLAN.

WE DON'T
HAVE TO DO
ANYTHING.

THANKS FOR
THE HELP HERE,
BUT NOW YOU
STAY OUT OF
MY WAY.

THIS
IS MY
FIGHT.

DOES NOT THE
BATTLE AGAINST
THE WICKED BELONG
TO US ALL?

YOU HAVE NO
RIGHT OR POWER
TO CLAIM IT FOR
YOURSELF.

ALICE
IS DEAD, AND
YOU'RE RUNNING
AROUND PLAYING
DRESS-UP.

IS THIS
ALL A GAME
TO YOU?

NOT
A GAME.
WAR.

THE POOR,
DISPOSSESSED, AND
DISENFRANCHISED HAVE
BEEN UNDER SIEGE
SINCE TIME
IMMEMORIAL.

NOW WE FIGHT
BACK, AND THIS TIME WE
MAKE OUR OWN RULES.
YOU SHOULD KNOW THAT
AS WELL AS ANYONE...
OPERATIVE.



The
way he's
looking
at me...

People always
said Alice and
I looked alike,
that we could
almost be
twins. But we
couldn't be
more different.



LOOK, WE
CAN'T STICK AROUND.
LET ME HELP YOU
PACK. YOU'RE GOING
TO NEED ME TO
PROTECT YOU.

WHAT'S A
DAME LIKE YOU
DOING IN AN
AIRFIELD HANGAR,
ANYHOW?

THAT'S
NOT YOUR
BUSINESS.

AND I CAN
TAKE CARE
OF MYSELF,
PIPER.

JUST DON'T
PAWDL, WILL YA?
MORE COPS WILL
BE HERE SOON.

THANKS
FOR THE TIP,
BOSS.



He wants to babysit me,
but I knew he wouldn't.
He has a killer to catch.

And I have
business
of my own.



I have equipment to move.
A workshop to take apart
and set up someplace new.

But I bet Piper
is diving right
into the action.

YOU
BELIEVE
THE DIRTY
COPS IN THIS
TOWN?

EVERY
LAST ONE
OF THEM
IS BENT.

UH...YOU
DO KNOW THIS
IS A COP JOINT,
DON'T YOU,
BUD?



OH,
TRUST ME,
FLATFOOT...



I
KNOW.

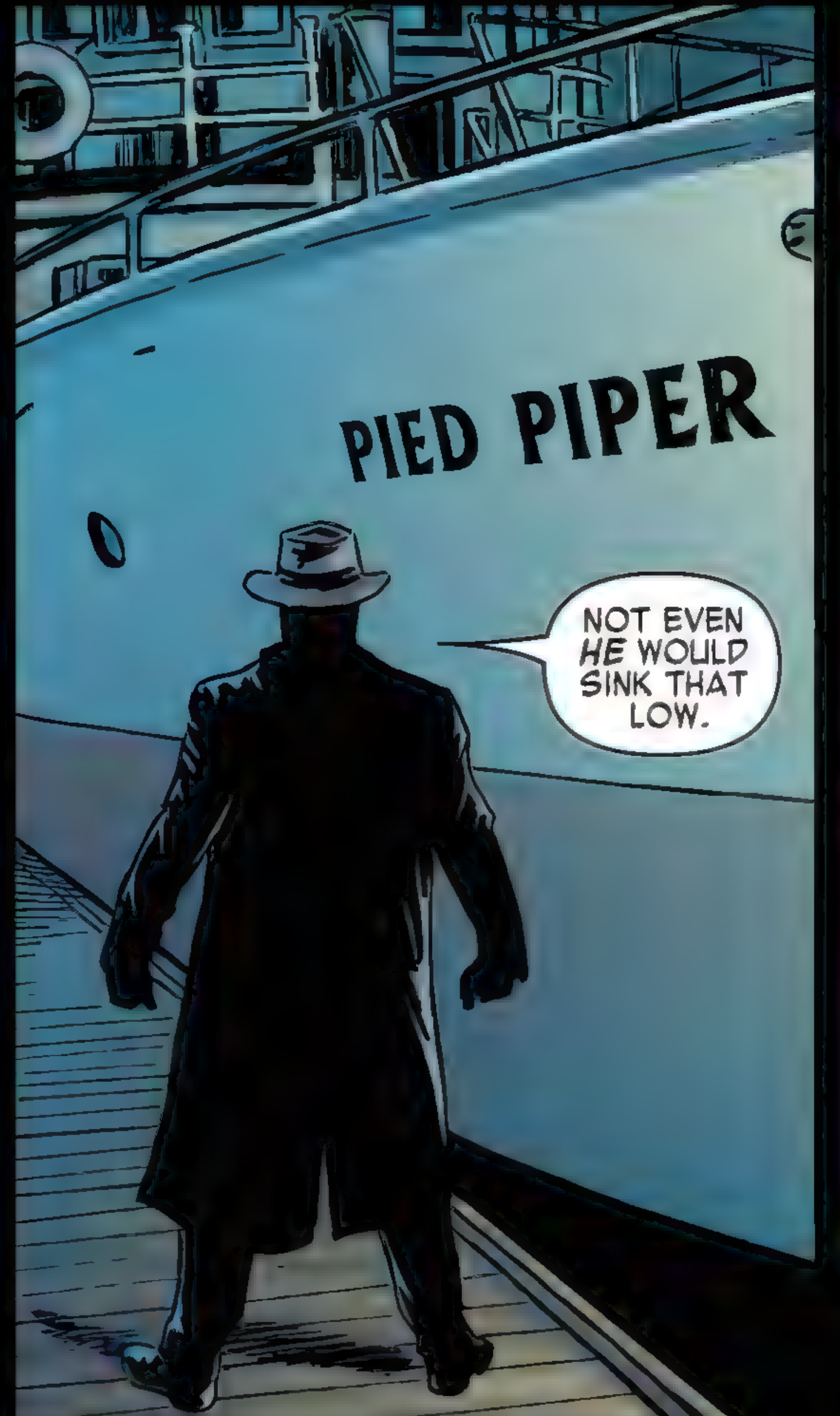


OH, GOD,
MY RIBS...

MMNNNH...

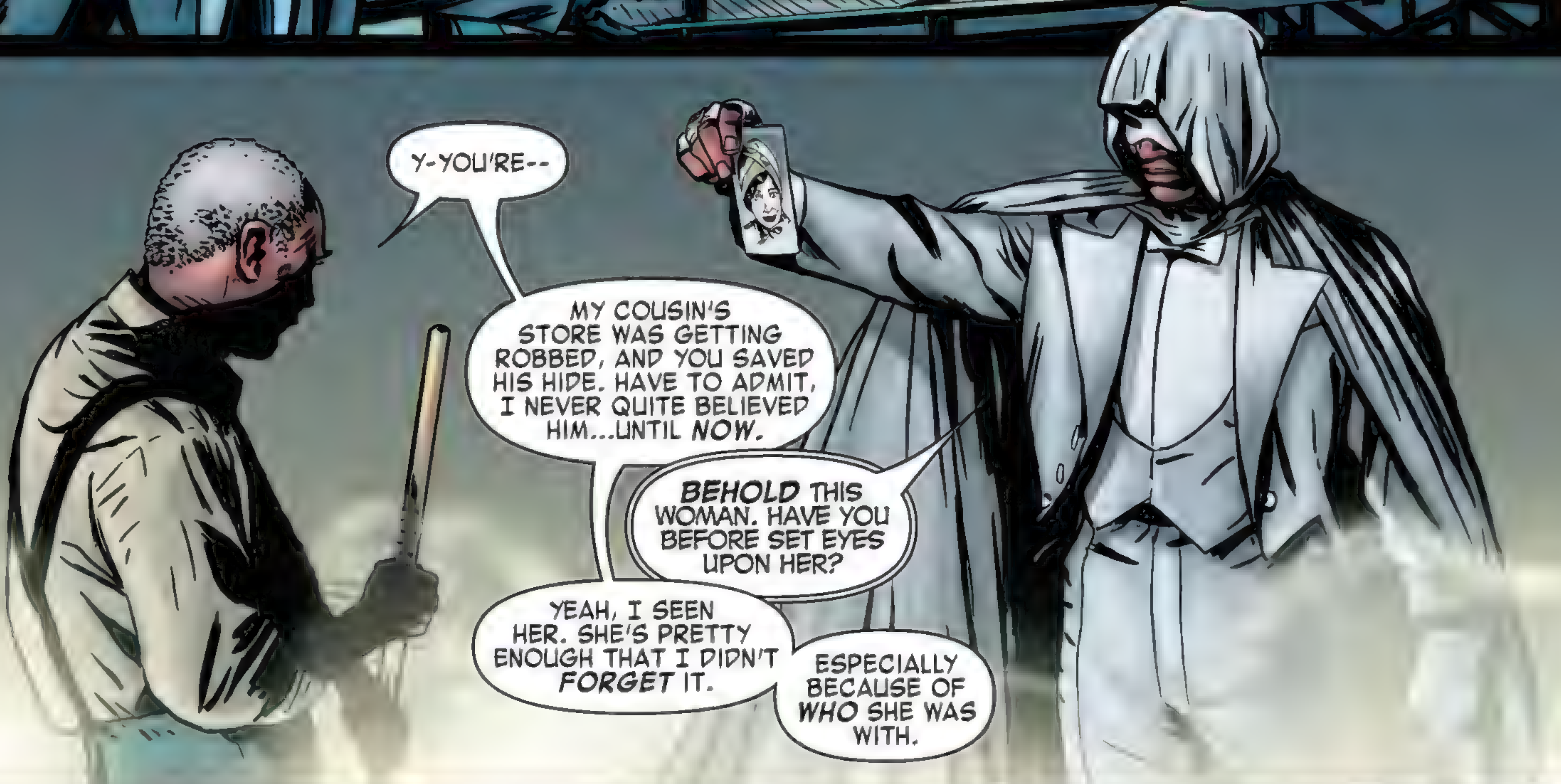


THE NEXT NIGHT.





AGAIN WITH THIS GUY.



Y-YOU'RE--

MY COUSIN'S STORE WAS GETTING ROBBED, AND YOU SAVED HIS HIDE. HAVE TO ADMIT, I NEVER QUITE BELIEVED HIM...UNTIL NOW.

BEHOLD THIS WOMAN. HAVE YOU BEFORE SET EYES UPON HER?

YEAH, I SEEN HER. SHE'S PRETTY ENOUGH THAT I DIDN'T FORGET IT.

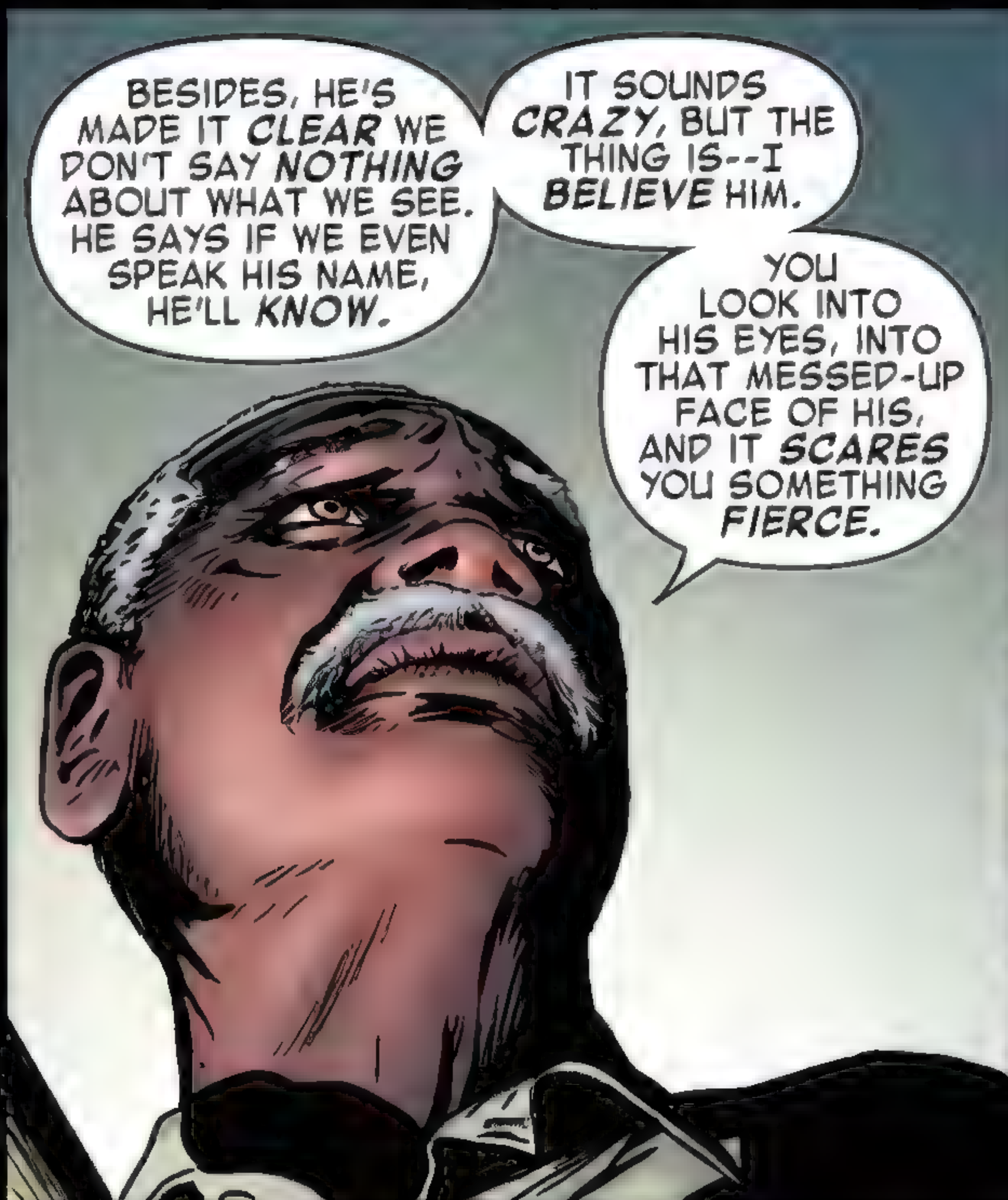
ESPECIALLY BECAUSE OF WHO SHE WAS WITH.



THERE IS JUSTICE TO BE DONE. YOU MUST TELL ME WHAT YOU SAW.

I SAW PLENTY MORE THAN I WANTED TO, YOU BEST BELIEVE THAT. COULDN'T GO TO THE COPS BECAUSE-- WELL, YOU KNOW WHY.

THEY'D PUT THE CLIFFS ON ME FOR SOMETHING. IT DON'T MATTER WHAT.



BESIDES, HE'S MADE IT CLEAR WE DON'T SAY NOTHING ABOUT WHAT WE SEE. HE SAYS IF WE EVEN SPEAK HIS NAME, HE'LL KNOW.

IT SOUNDS CRAZY, BUT THE THING IS--I BELIEVE HIM.

YOU LOOK INTO HIS EYES, INTO THAT MESSED-UP FACE OF HIS, AND IT SCARES YOU SOMETHING FIERCE.



HOW ABOUT I SAY HIS NAME, AND YOU TELL ME IF I'M RIGHT?



THE GENERAL.



YEAH. HIM.

AND JESUS HELP ME IF HE FINDS OUT I TOLD YOU.





I SEE YOU'VE DONE SOME HOMEWORK OF YOUR OWN.

SURE, I DID. AFTER YOUR LITTLE PERFORMANCE AT THE AIRFIELD, I FIGURED I'D DO SOME DIGGING.

"I HAD MY SUSPICIONS, AND I KNEW WHERE I MIGHT BE ABLE TO LEARN A THING OR TWO.

"THOSE TRICKS YOU CAN DO, PLUS YOU KNEW ALICE. I FIGURED YOU WERE PART OF HER **BROADWAY WORLD**, MAYBE WORKED ON ONE OF THOSE **MAGIC SHOWS**.



"A SMART EGG LIKE ME CAN WORK IT ALL OUT. A NEGRO STAGE ASSISTANT NAMED **EZEKIEL WRIGHT** DISAPPEARED AFTER BEING BLAMED BY THE POLICE FOR ATTACKING A WHITE GIRL TEN BLOCKS FROM WHERE HE WORKED.

"DIDN'T MUCH MATTER SHE SAID THE GUY WHO ATTACKED HER WAS WHITE.

"SOON AS **EZEKIEL WRIGHT** VANISHED, THE **REVENANT** STARTED SHOWING UP."



SO, NOW THAT WE KNOW EACH OTHER A LITTLE BETTER...

YOU CAN TELL ME ABOUT THIS **GENERAL**.

YOU'RE NOT GOING TO LET THIS ALONE, ARE YOU?

AS I SAID BEFORE, IT'S NOT ONLY YOUR FIGHT.



NO. IT'S OURS.



JEEZ. IS THERE ANYONE WHO DOESN'T KNOW ABOUT MY SECRET HIDING PLACE?

EZEKIEL TOLD ME. FIGURED I'D HELP HIM GET YOU TO SEE THINGS OUR WAY.

EZEKIEL TOLD YOU. *SWELL*. WHAT, ARE YOU TWO HAVING SECRET MEETINGS BEHIND MY BACK?

YOU DON'T WANT US AROUND, SO HOW ARE WE BEHIND YOUR BACK?

ARGUED LIKE A WOMAN.



COME, LET US SET ASIDE THIS SILLINESS. YOU OBVIOUSLY KNOW SOMETHING ABOUT WHO KILLED ALICE. YOU KNOW OF THIS **GENERAL**.

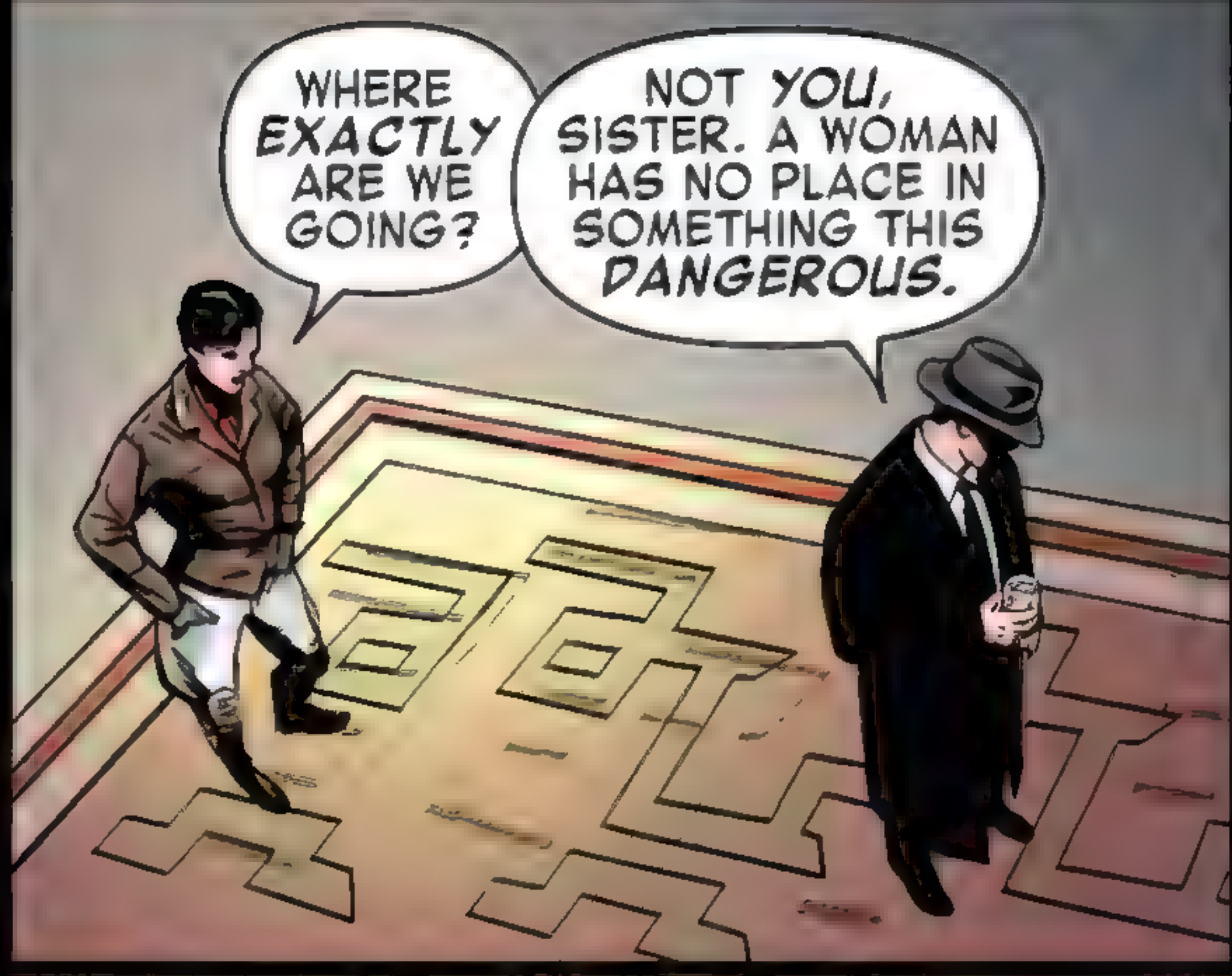
THAT'S RIGHT. I KNOW SOMETHING.

I KNOW I'M GOING AFTER HIM TOMORROW NIGHT.



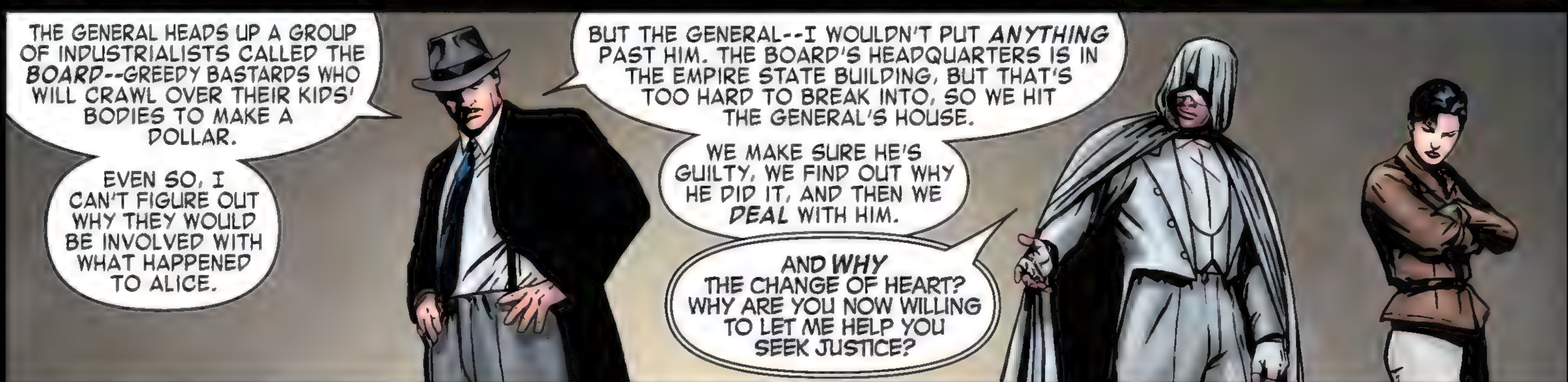
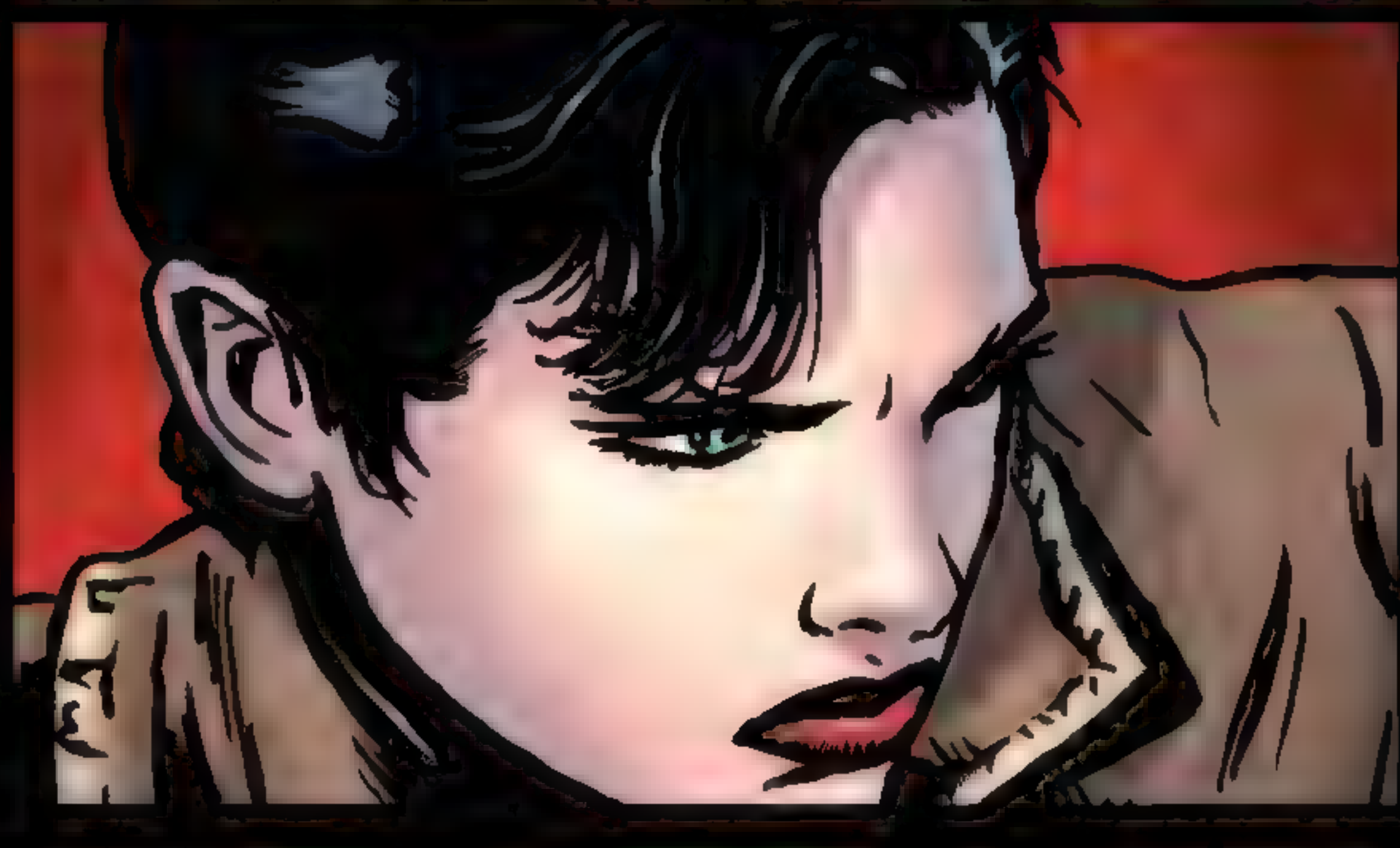
AND GUESS WHAT?

YOU'RE COMING WITH ME, ZEKE.



WHERE EXACTLY ARE WE GOING?

NOT YOU, SISTER. A WOMAN HAS NO PLACE IN SOMETHING THIS DANGEROUS.



THE GENERAL HEADS UP A GROUP OF INDUSTRIALISTS CALLED THE **BOARD**--GREEDY BASTARDS WHO WILL CRAWL OVER THEIR KIDS' BODIES TO MAKE A DOLLAR.

EVEN SO, I CAN'T FIGURE OUT WHY THEY WOULD BE INVOLVED WITH WHAT HAPPENED TO ALICE.

BUT THE GENERAL--I WOULDN'T PUT ANYTHING PAST HIM. THE BOARD'S HEADQUARTERS IS IN THE EMPIRE STATE BUILDING, BUT THAT'S TOO HARD TO BREAK INTO, SO WE HIT THE GENERAL'S HOUSE.

WE MAKE SURE HE'S GUILTY, WE FIND OUT WHY HE DID IT, AND THEN WE DEAL WITH HIM.

AND WHY THE CHANGE OF HEART? WHY ARE YOU NOW WILLING TO LET ME HELP YOU SEEK JUSTICE?

YOU VOLUNTEERED, ZEKE.

BESIDES, IT'S NOT POSSIBLE TO OVERESTIMATE THE GENERAL.

IF I DON'T HAVE A LITTLE HELP, THAT WEASEL WILL SLIP AWAY...AND THEN ALICE WON'T BE THE LAST BODY PULLED OUTTA THE HUDSON.



□ THE EMPIRE STATE □
BUILDING.

IF YOU TURN TO
PAGE 46 OF THE PROSPECTUS,
YOU WILL SEE THAT IT REMAINS IN
OUR BEST INTEREST TO **MAINTAIN**
A CLIMATE OF ECONOMIC
DEPRESSION FOR ANOTHER
FOUR TO FIVE YEARS.

THESE
CONDITIONS
WILL ALLOW US
THE **MAXIMUM**
POTENTIAL TO
EXPAND OUR
HOLDINGS.

AT THAT TIME,
WE CAN BEST ALTER
THE MARKET DYNAMICS
BY COAXING THE NATION
INTO A LARGE-SCALE
MILITARY OPERATION.
BOTH GERMANY AND
JAPAN APPEAR SUITED
TO OUR
PURPOSES.

BY 1937, THIS
NATION WILL BE FULLY
ALLIED WITH THOSE
POWERS AND RAMPING
UP OUR MILITARY BY
AIDING THEM IN THEIR
EXPANSION.

THIS IS VERY
WISE, FOR WE MUST
NOT CODDLE THE
PEOPLE.

I LEARN THIS
BACK IN RUSSIA. WAR
AND SUFFERING IS **GOOD**
SOURCE FOR OUR PROFIT,
YES? I CALL THIS
ENLIGHTENED SELF-
INTEREST.

AGAIN, GENERAL, I
MUST ASK YOU ABOUT
THESE **OUTRAGEOUS**
EXPENDITURES IN
TURKEY.

WHY IS THIS
BOARD SPENDING
SO MUCH MONEY ON
THIS LEWIS GREEN'S
ARCHEOLOGICAL
DIG?

**KOFF!
KOFF!
KOFF!**

I CAN ASSURE
YOU, THE DOOR IS
CLOSING ON THOSE
EXPENSES.

PROFESSOR
GREEN IS, EVEN NOW,
ON HIS WAY BACK TO
NEW YORK WITH HIS
DISCOVERY AT THE RUINS
OF TROY. I SHALL HAVE
IT IN MY HANDS VERY
SOON.

AND THEN, I
PROMISE, YOU WILL
NO LONGER BE INCLINED
TO PUT QUESTIONS
TO ME.

□ CURTISS AIRFIELD. □
QUEENS, NY.

OVER HERE,
PROFESSOR
GREEN. THE
GENERAL
SENT ME.

EXCUSE ME,
DRIVER. THIS
LOOKS LIKE
THE **WRONG**
WAY.

ARE YOU
GOING TOWARD
WASHINGTON
SQUARE?

NOTHING
DOING, PROFESSOR.
THE GENERAL SAYS I
BRING YOU TO HIM
PRONTO. NO STOPS,
NO DELAYS.

AND
BELIEVE
ME. WHEN THE
GENERAL SAYS
TO DO IT, IT
BETTER **GET**
DONE.

I KNOW THE
GENERAL IS ANXIOUS
TO EXAMINE MY FIND,
BUT I'M SURE HE WON'T
MIND IF I CLEAN
MYSELF UP.

AND I'D LIKE
TO VISIT MY FIANCE.
I HAVEN'T SEEN HER
SINCE--

SHUT IT,
EGGHEAD! I DON'T
WANT TO HEAR ANY
MORE **LIP** OUT OF YOU
OR I'LL USE THIS
TO KNOCK YOUR
TEETH OUT.

IF THAT DON'T
DO THE TRICK,
I'LL USE IT FOR
WORSE.





BRIDGET! I KNOW I SHOULD HAVE CALLED FIRST, BUT I WANTED TO SURPRISE YOU.



SOME THINGS HAPPENED, AND...



I'M *SORRY*, LEWIS. I WISH YOU'D CALLED FIRST.
BUT THINGS HAVE *CHANGED*. YOU WERE GONE A LONG TIME.



BUT I'VE BEEN THROUGH *SO MUCH*. I NEARLY *DIED* TRYING TO FIND THIS RIDICULOUS AMULET.

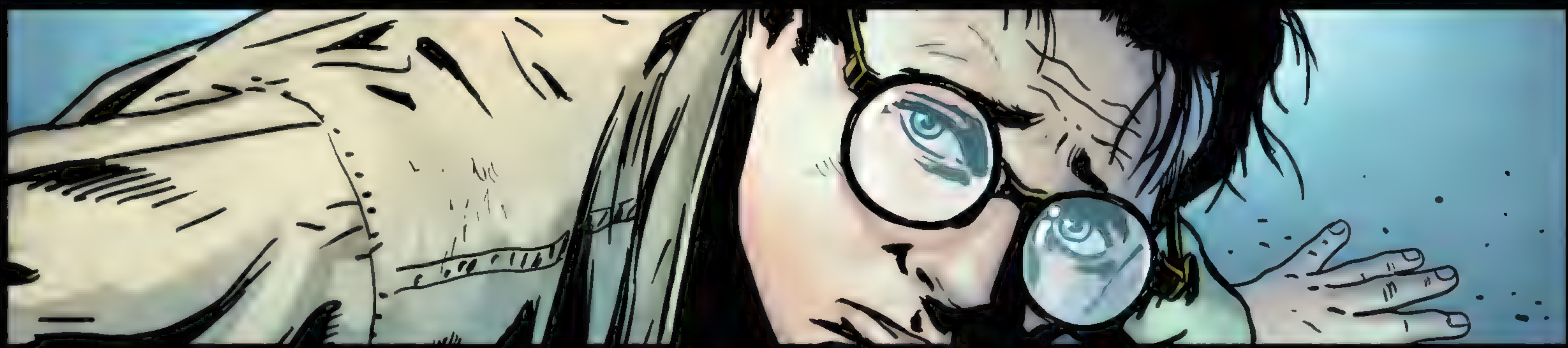
AND THIS CRAZY GENERAL, I DON'T KNOW WHAT HE'LL DO TO ME FOR RUNNING OFF WITH IT, BUT I RAN BECAUSE I WANTED TO SEE YOU.

HOW CAN YOU DO THIS TO ME?

PLEASE DON'T MAKE THIS ANY *HARDER* THAN IT HAS TO BE, LEWIS.



THIS GUY GIVING YOU GRIEF, DOLL?





□ CENTRAL
PARK WEST.

SIR, THAT
SITUATION YOU
SPOKE OF ON
THE PHONE...I'VE
MANAGED IT
JUST AS YOU
SAID.



GOOD.
PLEASE MAKE
CERTAIN I AM
NOT DISTURBED--
NO MATTER WHAT
YOU HEAR.



BUT GENERAL,
THERE IS ALSO A
PHONE CALL FROM
DR. GREEN. PERHAPS
YOU WOULD LIKE TO
SPEAK TO HIM ANOTHER
TIME, GIVEN THE
CIRCUMSTANCES?

NO. I'LL
TAKE IT NOW,
IN MY STUDY.



DAMN YOU,
GREEN. YOU ARE
PLAYING WITH
FIRE.

I DON'T CARE
ABOUT THE AMULET.
I JUST NEEDED
SOME TIME.

I'LL BRING
IT TO YOU TOMORROW
MORNING, AND I'LL BE
GLAD TO BE RID
OF IT.



TOMORROW
MORNING.

HELLO,
DAD.



I CAN'T SAY HOW MUCH YOU DISAPPOINT ME, DENNIS. I TRAINED YOU TO DO SO MUCH. I GAVE YOU THE FREEDOM TO DO WHATEVER YOU WANTED WITH YOUR LIFE, AND YOU WASTE YOUR TIME PLAYING AT ROBIN HOOD.

AND LOOK WHERE IT'S LEFT YOU. AN OUTLAW, ON THE RUN FROM THE POLICE.

PATHETIC.

I'D RATHER BE AN OUTLAW THAN ON THAT FOUL BOARD OF YOURS.



NOW, BEFORE I END THIS, MAYBE YOU COULD EXPLAIN TO ME WHY YOU MURDERED ALICE STARR.



GOSH, SON. I DON'T KNOW WHO THAT IS.

OH, YES. OF COURSE. YOUR GIRLFRIEND. WHAT MAKES YOU THINK I KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT HER HORRIBLE DEATH?



DON'T THINK I WON'T HESITATE TO **BEAT** IT OUT OF YOU.

THIS HAS BEEN A LONG TIME COMING, BUT NEVER MORE DESERVED.



WHERE DID I GO **WRONG** THAT YOU WOULD SPEAK THAT WAY TO YOUR HONORED FATHER?

CRACK

AH, THE
REVENANT.

AFTER READING OF
YOUR EXPLOITS IN THE
PAPERS, I UNDERSTOOD
YOU WERE THE SORT OF
DO-GOODER WHO WAS
EVENTUALLY GOING TO
GET IN MY WAY.

I SUPPOSE
NOW IS AS GOOD
A TIME AS ANY TO
REMOVE A POTENTIAL
NUISANCE.

THIS CREEP
IS YOUR FATHER?
YOU MIGHT HAVE
MENTIONED THAT
BEFORE.

YOU'RE
FORGETTING
TO SPEAK IN
YOUR FANCY
VOICE.

BECAUSE I'M
STILL TRYING TO
FIGURE OUT HOW
YOU CAME FROM
THIS MUMMIFIED
FREAK.

IF YOU ARE
DONE PLAYING AMOS
AND ANDY, I WILL TELL
YOU THAT I'VE KNOWN
YOU WERE HERE SINCE
I ARRIVED HOME.

MY SERVANT,
AS PER STANDING
ORDERS, HAS ASKED
FOR THE POLICE TO
COME TO MY RESCUE.
I'VE SIMPLY BEEN
STALLING YOU.



THE
OBVIOUS
POINT OF
EGRESS!

YOU
DON'T
SAY!

THE WAY I'M
CRASHING THROUGH
WINDOWS THIS WEEK,
I OUGHT TO INVEST
IN A GLASS
FACTORY!



WHAT'S
THE PLAN?

THE PLAN IS
WE KEEP BEATING
DOWN COPS UNTIL
THERE AREN'T
ANY LEFT.

THAT'S
YOUR BIG
IDEA?

WHY NOT?
IT'S ALWAYS
WORKED
BEFORE.



I THINK IT'S TIME FOR A NEW PLAN.



YEAH. IF YOU'VE GOT ONE OF THOSE MAGIC TRICKS OF YOURS, THIS WOULD BE A PRETTY GOOD TIME.



They said I could never fly again...

...but they only made
me promise not to
pilot an *airplane*.

EVENING,
BOYS!

I HOPE YOU
DON'T MIND A WOMAN
BUTTING IN WHILE YOU
TWO ARE SO MANFULLY
GETTING YOURSELVES
KILLED.

□ TO BE CONTINUED! □

The
OP

DATE	JUNE 22	INVESTIGATOR	Patrick Zircher	CASE FILE	MM 002
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A lot of the attraction of working on MYSTERY MEN comes from the cast of characters that David Liss has created for the book, a group that satisfies any artist's yearning to draw pulp heroes. With The Operative we have a character that's probably the most representative of all the pulps, the detective (his name is even inspired by Dashiell Hammett's Continental Op). This is the character with clothes that most bring to mind classic noir movies; fedora, suit, black leather shoes. But our Operative is also a jewel thief and cat burglar--and a masked man. Working out a mask that avoids the well-known look of The Spirit and Green Hornet but still functions with a hat, I simply inverted the cut of the mask, leaving the area around the eyes open and the rest of the face concealed. I liked it immediately. In the stories themselves, we added a long dark coat and trimmed him down a few pounds to enhance the style and mood and to match Dennis Piper's suaveness out of costume.



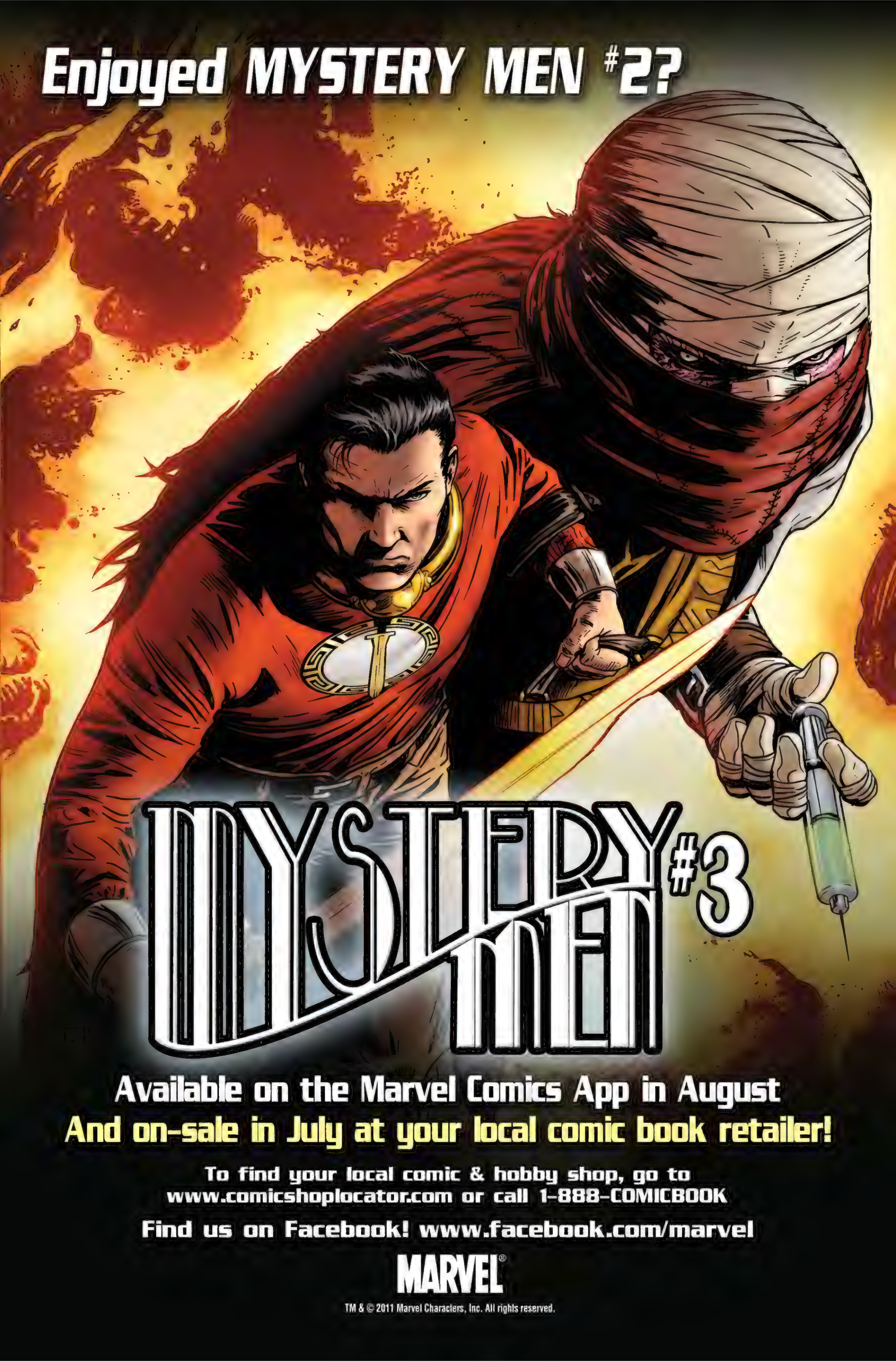
The Revenant's name is derived from English folklore as a kind of ghost or spirit and, initially, he was going to have a ragged, spectral appearance. But as designs for the other Mystery Men emerged it became apparent a ragged look would interfere with the atmosphere we wanted to have surrounding The Surgeon. Instead we found ghostly qualities in his all-white costume and in his manner and abilities, such as his sudden appearances and disappearances, the roiling smoke that appears around him, his hooded cloak, fingerless gloves, and so forth. Ezekiel Wright's costume, as you'll see in upcoming issues, also has roots in the glamour and theatrics of Broadway of the '20s and '30s--his tuxedo, dress shoes, and showy ring are designed to reflect that. So by concentrating on giving The Revenant a separate, individual identity, and by keeping in mind his origin, he developed a look that I now can't imagine him not having.



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To try and convert

Enjoyed MYSTERY MEN #2?



MYSTERY MEN #3

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MYSTERY MAN

DAVID LISS
PATRICK ZIRCHER
ANDY TROY



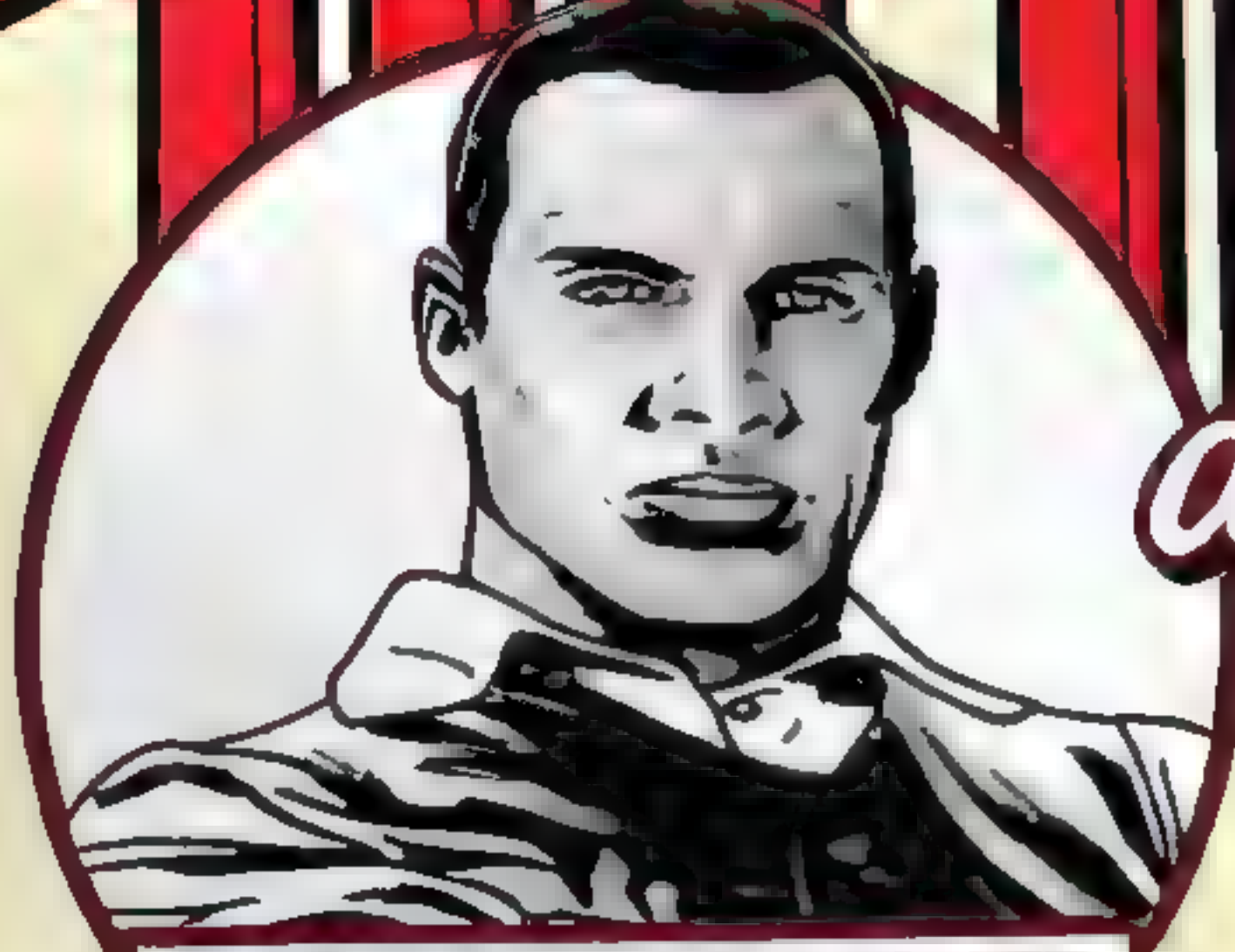
MYSTERY MEN



DENNIS PIPER
AKA
THE OPERATIVE



SARAH STARR
AKA
THE AVIATRIX



EZEKIEL WRIGHT
AKA
THE REVENANT



**PROFESSOR
LEWIS GREEN**

Starring

and



Last time...

New York City, 1932. The Great Depression has stirred unrest on every level of society. A man known as The General heads a board of the rich and powerful, controlling the fates of millions. He has also made a pact with a demonic fear lord named Nox to use human sacrifices to return the entity to its true form. In return, Nox has offered him power via a unique amulet that archeologist Lewis Green is transporting from the ruins of Troy.

Meanwhile, Dennis Piper—a cat thief known as The Operative—has been framed for the headline-grabbing murder of his girlfriend, Broadway starlet Alice Starr. On the run and seeking justice, Piper united with Alice's sister Sarah, now the high-flying Aviatrix, and the mystical showman vigilante known as The Revenant. After following the twisted trail of clues, Piper discovered that Alice's killer is his own father, The General.

**DAVID
LISS** &
WRITER

**PATRICK
ZIRCHER**
ARTIST

ANDY TROY
COLORIST

DAVE SHARPE
LETTERER

MANNY MEDEROS
PRODUCTION

RACHEL & JOHN PINNELAS & DENNING
ASSISTANT EDITORS

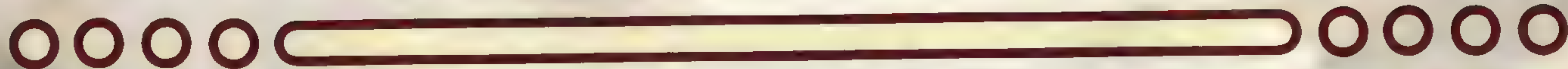
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DAN BUCKLEY
PUBLISHER

ALAN FINE
EXECUTIVE PRODUCER



THE
EMPIRE STATE
BUILDING.

HEAD-
QUARTERS
OF THE
BOARD.





I BELIEVE I LEFT ORDERS THAT I WAS NOT TO BE DISTURBED.

HKKK!

WELL HELLO, GENERAL.



NOX! HAVE YOU COME TO BERATE ME? ISN'T IT ENOUGH THAT THIS DISEASE EATS AWAY AT MY LUNGS?

I HAD THE AMULET IN MY CONTROL, AND I FAILED TO KEEP IT.



IT CAUSES ME MORE PAIN THAN YOU CAN IMAGINE TO APPEAR HERE. I WOULD NOT TROUBLE MYSELF ONLY TO CHASTISE YOU.

WE STILL NEED ONE ANOTHER.

NO, I COME TO TELL YOU ALL IS NOT LOST. I CAN STILL SAVE YOU.



I CAN HELP YOU REGAIN WHAT HAS BEEN LOST. BUT I MUST RETURN TO MY TRUE FORM FIRST.

TO ACCOMPLISH THIS, YOU MUST ABANDON ALL VESTIGES OF MORALITY AND HUMANITY.

ARE YOU READY TO DO THAT?



MY DEAR... I'VE BEEN WAITING FOR YOU TO ASK.

□ DARK WILLOW, WEST VIRGINIA. □

□ POPULATION 167. □

□ THREE DAYS EARLIER. □

It seems like we've abandoned all morals and humanity.



I grew up in Dark Willow. I guess I could have gone *anywhere* after medical school, but I went back *home*.

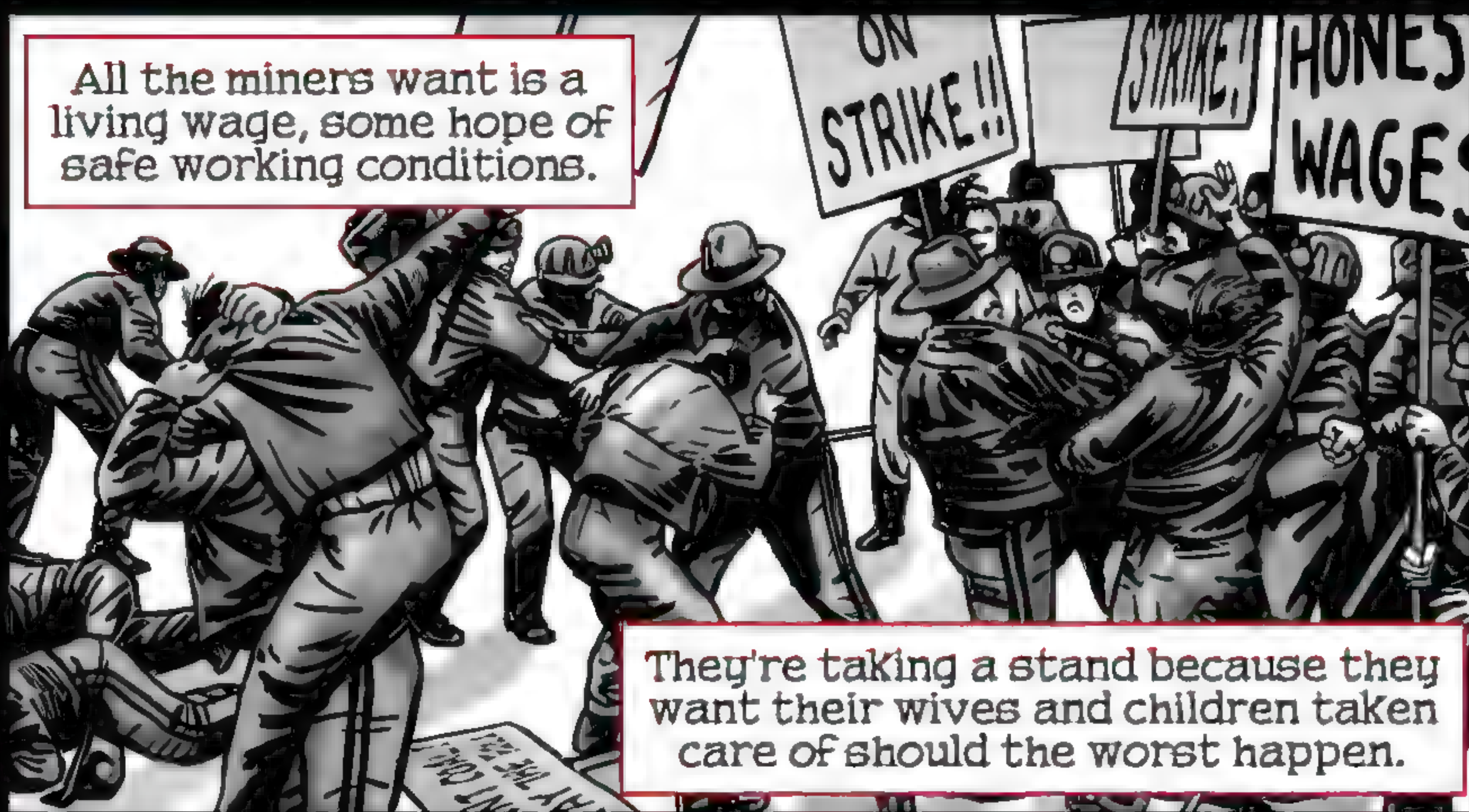
I became a doctor so I could *help* the people of this town.

Some help I am.

EAT YOUR FRIED CHICKEN, RUPERT. YOU NEED YOUR STRENGTH FOR YOUR DOCTORIN'.

YES, MOTHER.

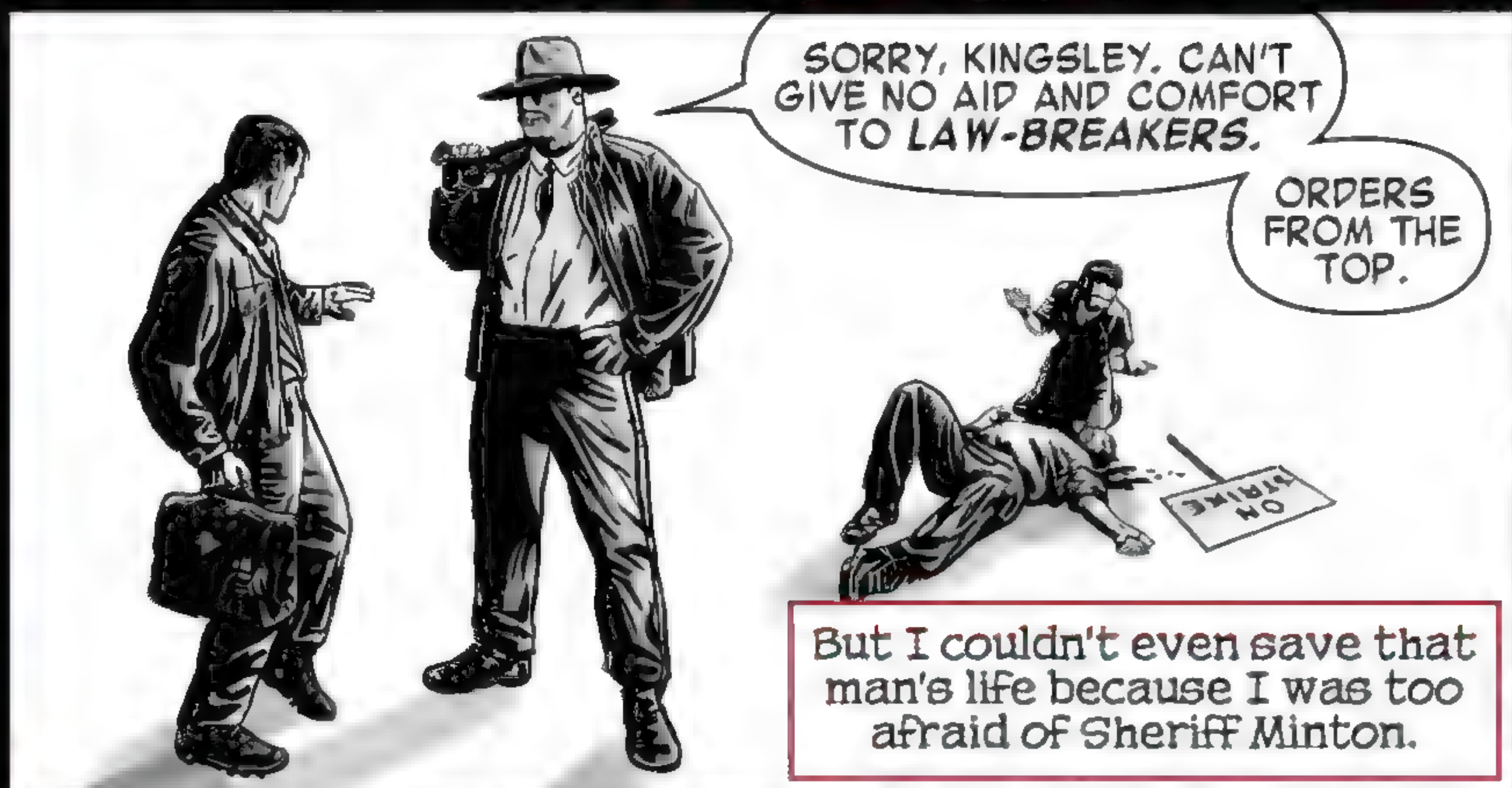
All the miners want is a living wage, some hope of safe working conditions.



They're taking a stand because they want their wives and children taken care of should the worst happen.

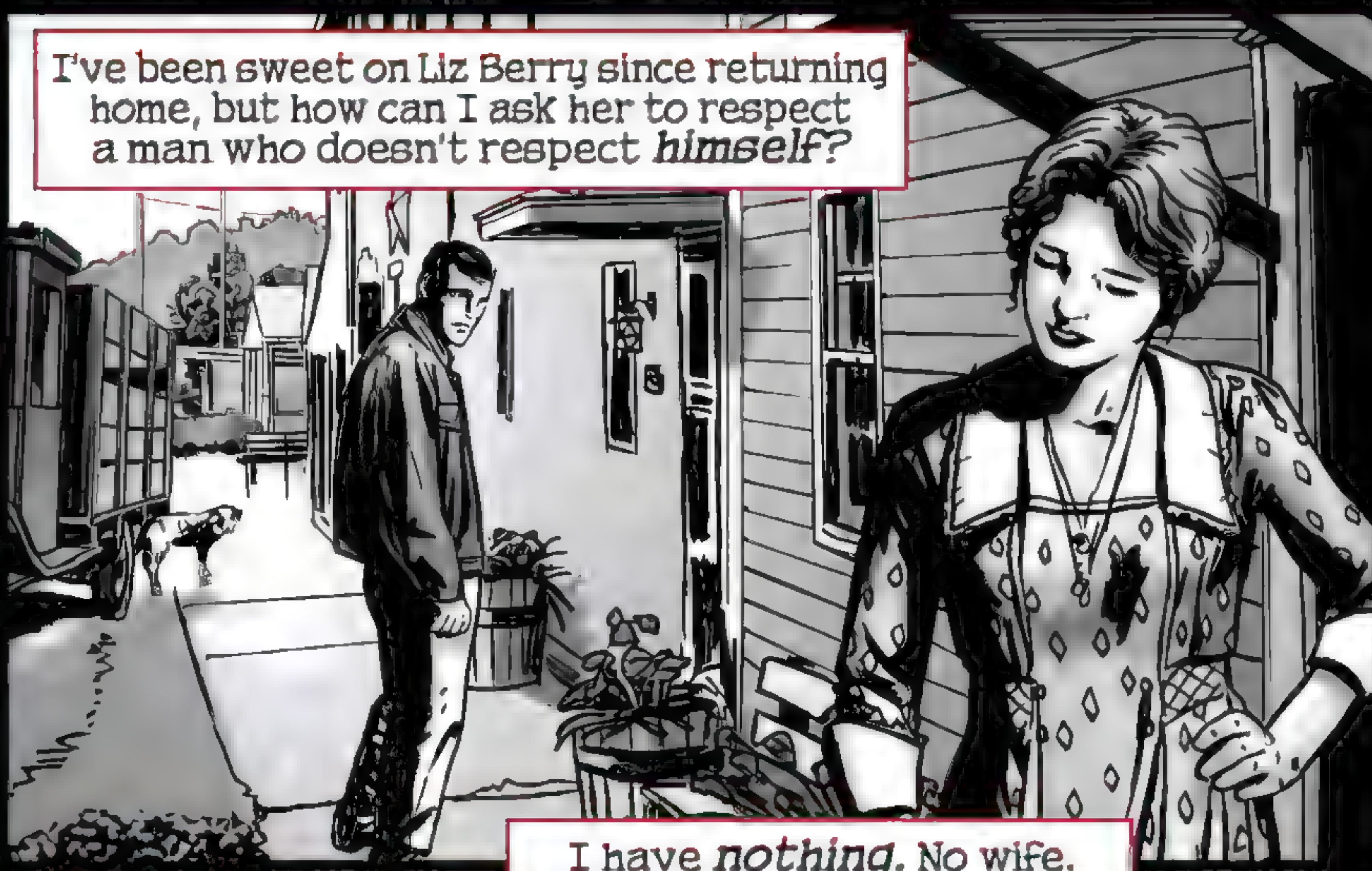
SORRY, KINGSLEY. CAN'T GIVE NO AID AND COMFORT TO LAW-BREAKERS.

ORDERS FROM THE TOP.



But I couldn't even save that man's life because I was too afraid of Sheriff Minton.

I've been sweet on Liz Berry since returning home, but how can I ask her to respect a man who doesn't respect *himself*?



I have *nothing*. No wife. No children. Just my mother who comes to my house to cook me dinner twice a week.

WHEN ARE YOU GOING TO FIND A NICE GIRL TO TAKE CARE OF YOU?



PLEASE, I DON'T WANT TO TALK ABOUT THIS AGAIN.

Some people fight back. Some find the courage.

Like up there in New York--these *Mystery Men*. The *Operative*, The *Revenant*. Maybe others. No one could say for sure.

The Mountain Messenger

Crooks or Crusaders? Police and Public at Odds About NY's Masked Men

The papers say they're criminals, but any fool can see they're standing up for what's right.

Flying Woman Seen Over City

I could never be brave enough to make the choices they made.

Mystery Men Strike Again

But none of us know what we will do until we're tested.

DOC KINGSLEY, YOU'VE GOT TO COME. IT'S MY PA. THE SHERIFF'S MEN BEAT HIM REAL BAD. MA SAYS HE'LL DIE IF YOU DON'T HELP.

I'VE GOT TO DO THIS, MOTHER.

I KNOW YOU WANT TO DO THE RIGHT THING, RUPERT, BUT YOU CAN'T SIDE AGAINST SHERIFF MINTON. HE'LL HURT YOU.

I'VE GOT TO TRY. SOMEONE HAS TO.

THEN DON'T EXPECT TO FIND ME HERE WHEN YOU GET BACK. THIS IS NO WAY TO TREAT YOUR OLD MOTHER.

Willis is one of the big men in the union, and they've worked him over before. But not like *this*.

I'm so scared my hands are shaking, but I'm *here*.
I am, in my own small way, being a *hero*.

THIS WILL
EASE THE
PAIN.

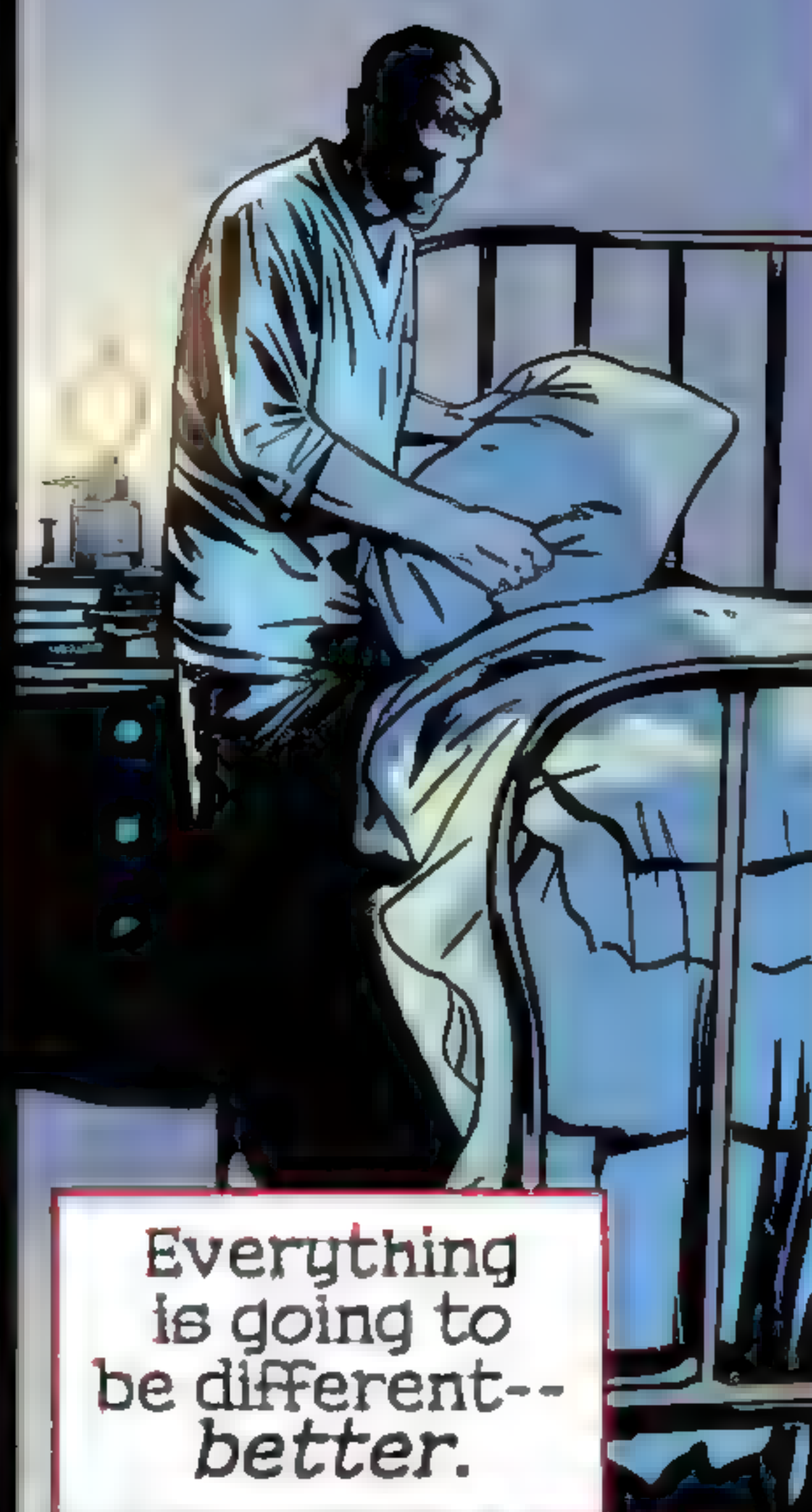


I thought they'd be waiting for me, but everything is the way I left it.



They can't stop me from being the kind of doctor--the kind of *man*--I want to be.

The kind of man who can ask Liz Berry out to the pictures.



Everything is going to be different--*better*.



But when I wake up, I know...

...I've just been a *fool*.



Before, my thoughts
were a tangled mess
of doubt and confusion.



But in the pain,
I find *clarity*.



My house is destroyed. My body *disfigured*. In an instant, everything I have is *gone*.

None of it matters.

This is an open door. I'm walking through it.



The agony is just my body telling me a message.

I'm taking something so I won't have to listen.



It doesn't matter if my face is ruined.

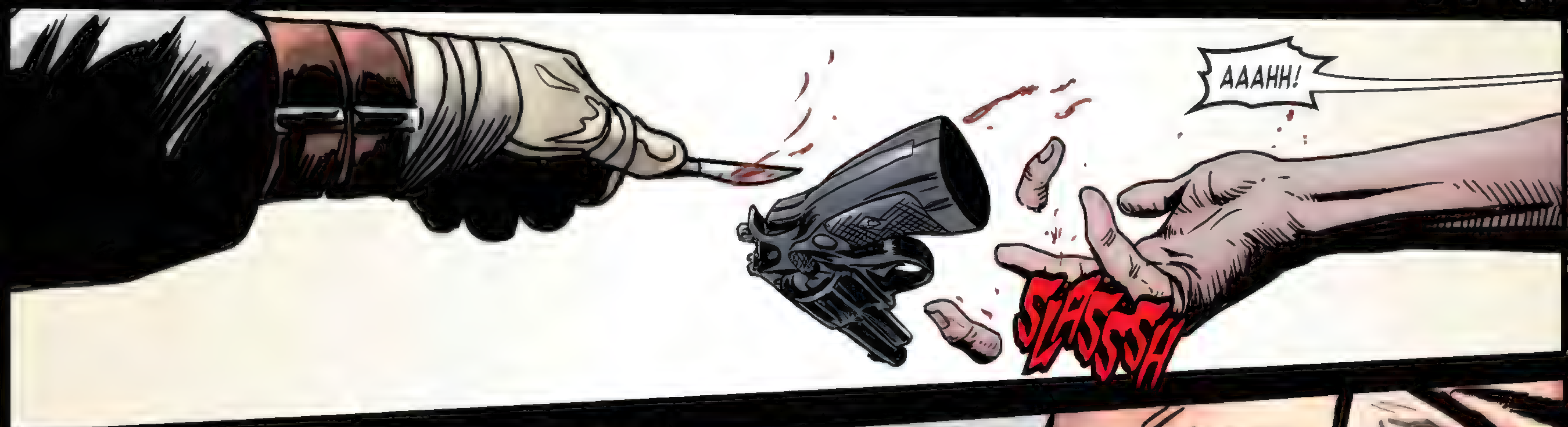
No one ever looked at me.



I have no need to look fashionable or prosperous. I'll wear the garb of my profession.



And I will never neglect my duty to prevent the spread of infection.





I'M GOING TO HAVE TO ASK YOU A FEW QUESTIONS, SHERIFF.

AND AS YOUR **SURGEON**, I WANT YOU TO KNOW THAT YOUR ANSWERS WILL BE HELD IN THE **STRICTEST** OF CONFIDENCE.



KINGSLEY. IS THAT YOU?

I... I CAN'T MOVE!

YES, I NEED YOU TO REMAIN STILL FOR THE OPERATION. BUT DON'T WORRY...

YOU WILL FEEL EVERYTHING.

I'M SORRY FOR WHAT I DONE. IT WASN'T NOTHING **PERSONAL**. THEY SAID I HAD TO DO IT.

I'LL TELL YOU WHATEVER YOU WANT TO KNOW!

BUT YOU GOTTA UNDERSTAND. IF I TALK, THEY SAID THEY'D TAKE IT OUT ON THE ENTIRE TOWN.



YOU'RE A REAL **SAINT**. ALWAYS THINKING ABOUT OTHERS.

LET'S SLICE THROUGH YOUR HESITATION.



SHHH. ALMOST DONE. DEEP BREATHS, NOW. THAT'S VERY GOOD.

And he *does* tell me everything I want to know.

He tells me that the orders came from the mining company's owners in New York. *The Board*, he calls it. He gives me a *great deal* of information.

He's a *very* good patient.



A man in a dark coat and hat is walking away on a snowy path. The path is flanked by bare trees and a fence. The sky is a pale blue.

Rupert Kingsley is *dead*.
I can't take my own car. I
can't say goodbye to mother.

This is the end
of everything...

...and a new
beginning.



I have to get to New York,
to find the people who had
done this to me--to my town.

A wide shot of a city skyline at night. The skyline is filled with tall buildings, some of which are lit up. The sky is dark blue.

The big city. It's
all *poverty* and
fear here too.

The *rich* are
feeding off hunger
and desperation.

I know my enemy
is the *Board*.

A man in a dark coat and hat is running across a snowy street towards a car. The car is a dark-colored sedan with a white roof rack. The street is lined with trees and a fence. The sky is a pale blue.

To defeat them, I
have to learn how
they work.

The government, the
cops, everything is
rotten to the bone.

A man in a dark coat and hat is running across a snowy street towards a car. The car is a dark-colored sedan with a white roof rack. The street is lined with trees and a fence. The sky is a pale blue.

This corruption
is a *cancer*.

Time to
start
cutting.

I need to find
the *key point* to
make my incision.

Everything I've read suggests
there's one member of
the Board most likely to talk.

ARRGG!

ALL
THE PEOPLE IN
THIS CITY, AND A
COSTUMED FREAK
HAS TO TRY TO
HELP ME.

THEY JUST
WANTED THEIR
PAYOFF. I
DIDN'T NEED TO
BE RESCUED.

I'M NOT
RESCUING
YOU. I'M
ABDUCTING
YOU.

YOU HAVE
A LOYAL CLIENT
I NEED TO TALK TO,
AND YOU ARE GOING
TO GET ME INTO
HIS HOUSE.

BUT
FIRST, A LITTLE
PENICILLIN. BETTER
TO BE *SAFE*.

□ THAT NIGHT. □

My name is *Lewis Green*. I used to be an archeologist.

I made a *bad* decision. I accepted a private job from a man who wanted me to search the ruins of Troy for an artifact.

WAKE UP, SLEEPING BEAUTY. THE GENERAL WANTS A WORD WITH YOU.

Already it had cost me my fiancée, Bridget.

While I was gone she'd left me for some tough guy. I guess she didn't think a professor was *man* enough for her.

I DON'T UNDERSTAND. WE WERE SUPPOSED TO MEET TOMORROW.

HE CHANGED HIS MIND. JUST MAKE SURE YOU BRING WHAT HE WANTS.

Now it looks like it was going to cost me *everything*.

WHY ARE WE GOING UP?

GENERAL WANTS TO MEET YOU ON THE ROOF.

I'M GUESSING YOU WON'T BE TAKING THE STAIRS DOWN. BUT AT LEAST THE RETURN TRIP'LL BE FASTER.

HEH. GOOD ONE.

MY TIMETABLE HAS ACCELERATED, PROFESSOR.

I COULD NOT WAIT UNTIL MORNING.



YOU TWO MAY GO. I CAN HANDLE THE PROFESSOR MYSELF.

AND YOU, GREEN. OPEN THE BRIEFCASE AND LET ME SEE IT.



IT'S CLEARLY A REMARKABLE FIND, GENERAL, BUT WHY GO TO ALL THIS TROUBLE?

WHY *THIS* AMULET AND NOTHING ELSE?

BECAUSE THAT AMULET BELONGED TO *ACHILLES* HIMSELF. IT WAS WHAT MADE HIM WHO HE WAS.



TAKE IT. I DON'T WANT ANYTHING TO DO WITH IT.

PUT IT DOWN. YOU ARE NOT WORTHY TO TOUCH IT, AND I MUST *PURIFY* MYSELF BEFORE I ALLOW MY FLESH TO BE SANCTIFIED.



YOU HAVE NO *IDEA* WHAT IT IS, PROFESSOR. YOU HAVE NO *IDEA* WHAT IT CAN *DO*.

THERE HAVE ALWAYS BEEN IN THIS WORLD MEN OF *EXTRAORDINARY*, EVEN *UNIMAGINABLE* POWER. SOMETIMES SUCH MEN HIDE IN THE SHADOWS. OTHER TIMES THEY STRIDE OPENLY TO BE OBEYED AND WORSHIPPED.

THAT DEVICE WAS MADE BY THOSE WHO CALLED THEMSELVES *GODS*, AND ITS PURPOSE IS TO ELEVATE A MERE MORTAL TO DIVINE STRENGTH, POWER AND *VITALITY*.



SURELY YOU DON'T BELIEVE--

DO BE QUIET, PROFESSOR. I AM GIVING YOU A PARTING GIFT OF KNOWLEDGE.

THIS AMULET TRANSFORMED AN ORDINARY WARRIOR INTO THE *GREATEST* OF GREEK HEROES.

BUT THE GODS COULD NOT ALLOW A MORTAL TO POSSESS SUCH A WEAPON UNLESS IT HAD *LIMITS*.

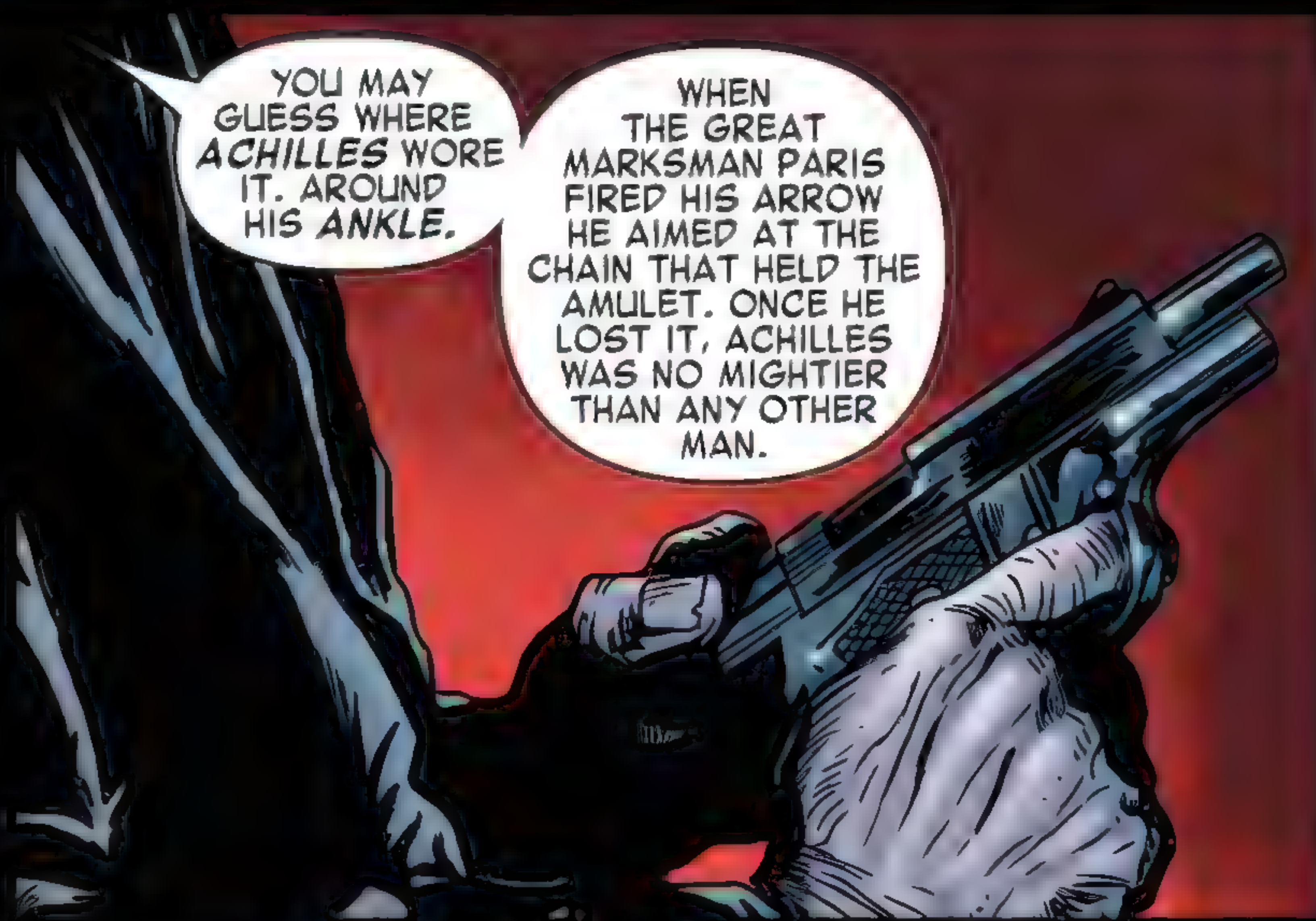
EACH TIME A MAN ACTIVATED THE AMULET, OR WORE IT FOR MORE THAN ONE DAY, HE WOULD LOSE A YEAR OF HIS LIFE. THAT YEAR COULD ONLY BE REGAINED BY *BLOODSHED*.

EACH LIFE TAKEN WHILE USING THE AMULET WOULD RESTORE A YEAR.



YOU MAY GUESS WHERE *ACHILLES* WORE IT. AROUND HIS ANKLE.

WHEN THE GREAT MARKSMAN PARIS FIRED HIS ARROW HE AIMED AT THE CHAIN THAT HELD THE AMULET. ONCE HE LOST IT, *ACHILLES* WAS NO MIGHTIER THAN ANY OTHER MAN.



OF COURSE, NO ONE CAN KNOW ABOUT THIS, WHICH IS WHY YOU MUST DIE.

YOU'RE NUTS! YOU DON'T REALLY MEAN TO KILL ME OVER THIS, DO YOU?



NO!

BLAM

K-TANG



Somehow I *understand* how it works.

There's a pool of energy, and I can *draw* from it. I can *remake* myself and the things around me.

The energy is finite, and I know that using too much of it will be *dangerous*.

But using just enough...

HEY, IS THAT--? IT'S THE PROFESSOR GEEK. BUT WHAT'S HE--

...that's going to be *swell*.

WHAM

Part of me is *scared* and *confused*. The General had tried to kill me. I'd been shot at, fallen off a building, *transformed*...

But part of me feels *natural*, as though this is who I've *always* been. I haven't been transformed *into* Achilles...

...the Achilles inside me has *escaped* from the confines of Lewis Green.

Part of me wants to apologize. To help these fellows to the hospital.

And another part of me thinks I hadn't been tough enough for Bridget before...

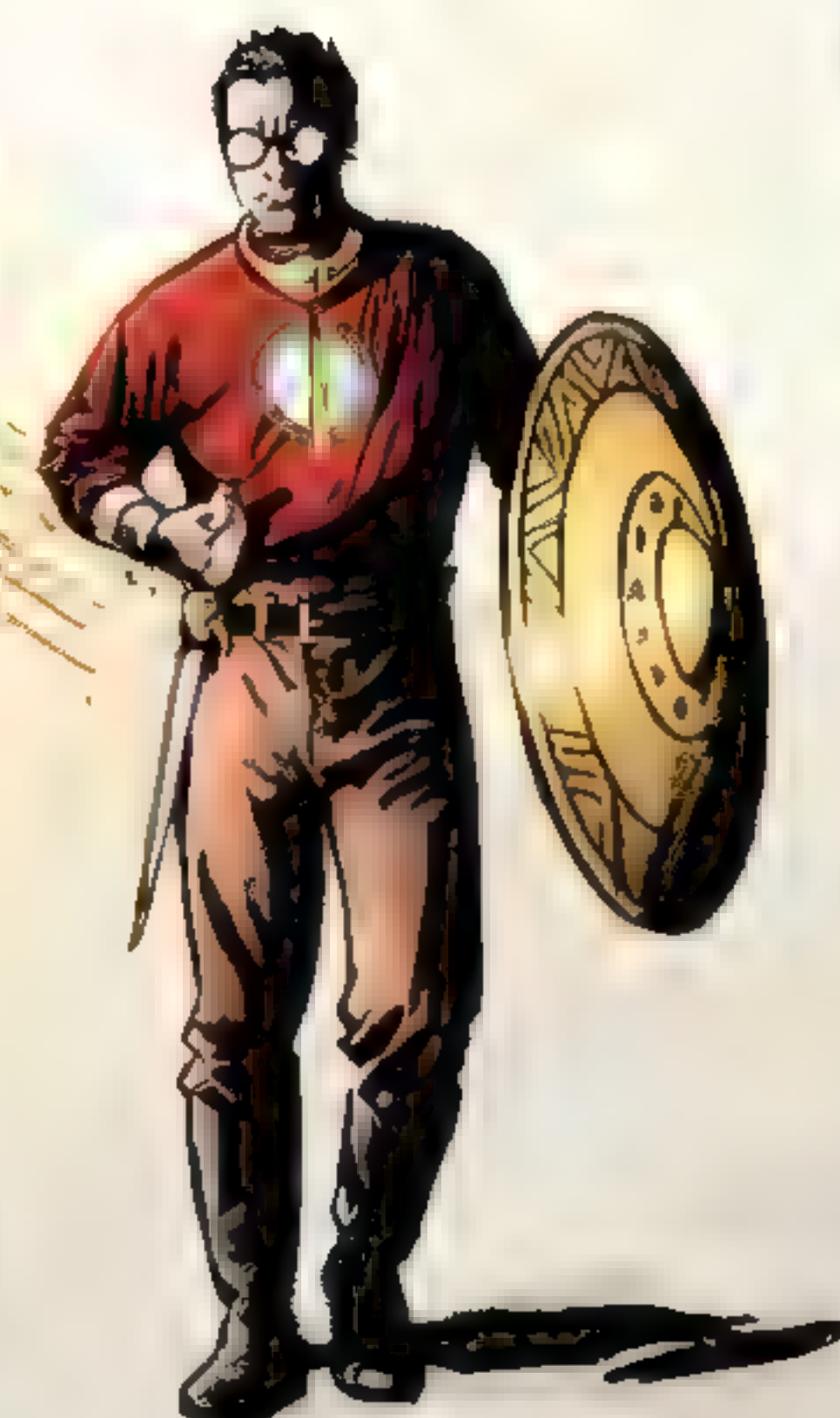
But I'm *plenty* tough now.

So much has happened... has changed.

But I don't care about that. I want Bridget.

HEY, HAS THE CIRCUS COME TO TOWN? BECAUSE YOU LOOK LIKE A CLOWN IN THAT GETUP.

LEAVE WHILE YOU CAN, JOEY. I'M GOING TO TALK TO MY FIANCEE.



I feel the wrath of war-like Achilles.

WISE UP, DAFFODIL. SHE AIN'T YOURS NO MORE.

No one will stand in my way.



Somewhere in the back of my mind, a little voice tells me to stop. But another voice roars to hit, and hit hard.

YOU STOLE MY GIRL, JOEY...

BUT NOW YOU'RE GOING TO GIVE ME SOMETHING IN RETURN. A YEAR OF LIFE!





I can *smell* his energy. I can *taste* it in the air. I *want* it...and the Achilles in me wants to *take* it.

But the Lewis Green in me can't take that step, can't become that *beast*.

GET OUT OF HERE, YOU MONSTER!

YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND. I STILL LOVE YOU!

Over and over again, I seem to lose every-thing.

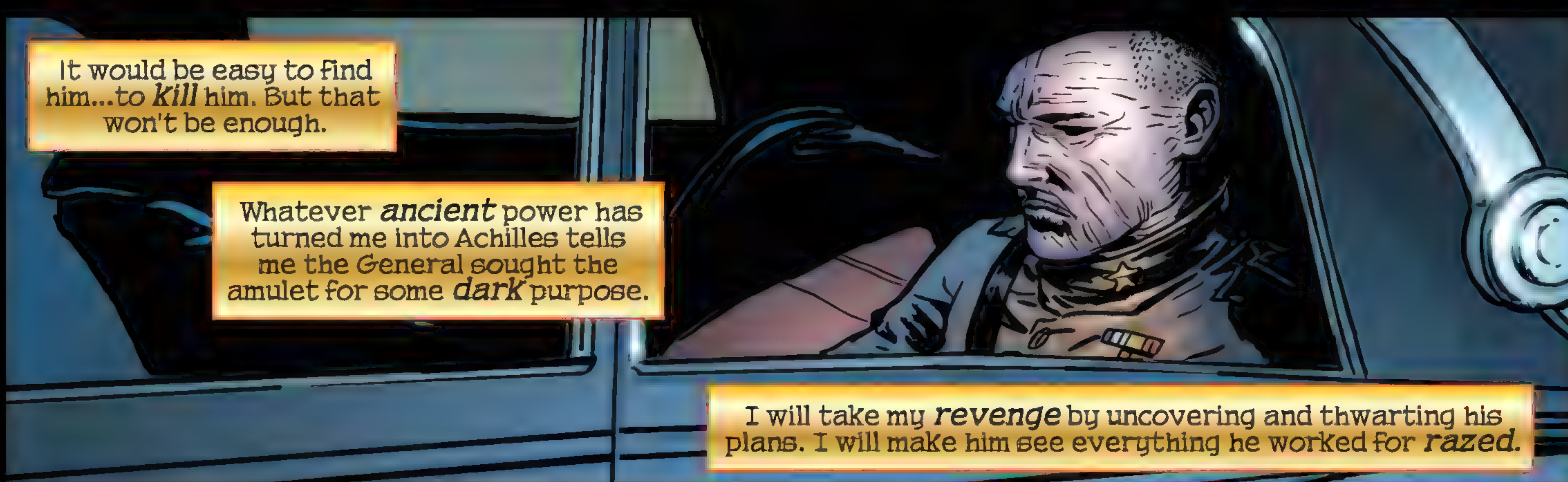


NO... YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND. I NEVER LOVED YOU!

NOT BEFORE, AND CERTAINLY NOT NOW THAT YOU'VE GONE INSANE!



Damn you, General!



It would be easy to find him...to *kill* him. But that won't be enough.

Whatever *ancient* power has turned me into Achilles tells me the General sought the amulet for some *dark* purpose.

I will take my *revenge* by uncovering and thwarting his plans. I will make him see everything he worked for *razed*.



By God--by *all* the gods-- I will *destroy* his life the way he destroyed mine!

□ ACROSS TOWN. □

After my *father*, the General, admitted he'd *murdered* Alice, it was hard not to go back and take my vengeance.

My new "friends" talked me out of it. He'd be waiting, they said. And there had to be more to the story.

GO ON IN, BOYS. I'LL KEEP AN EYE OUT FOR TROUBLE.

YOU BE CAREFUL NOW, SARAH.

We took some time to find out which member of the Board might be most likely to squeal on the General.

We need to learn why he killed Alice. He'd *hated* me my whole life, but none of us thinks he risked murder simply to be *cruel*.

There's a piece of the puzzle missing, and once I find it, then we can deliver *justice* to the man who killed the woman I *loved*.



And just when I think I've seen enough crazy things...

MY GOODNESS, IT'S THE REVENANT AND THE OPERATIVE. I DO SO ADMIRE WHAT YOU'VE DONE.

YOU HAVE INSPIRED ME TO BECOME WHAT I AM.

LET ME INSPIRE YOU ALL THE WAY TO THE SLAMMER, YOU WACKO.

PLEASE, I DON'T WANT TO FIGHT YOU.

HOWEVER, I WILL ADMINISTER A MILD *SEPA*TIVE SO YOU WILL HEAR ME OUT.





IMPRESSIVE
REFLEXES,
OPERATIVE.

I SPENT MOST
OF MY CHILDHOOD
TRAINING, THANKS
TO DEAR OLD
DAD.



STOP! I AM
A MYSTERY MAN,
LIKE YOU. WE ARE
NOT ENEMIES!

THAT WOULD
BE A LOT MORE
CONVINCING IF YOU
HADN'T DISSECTED
THAT BIRD.



I QUESTIONED
HIM FIRST. AND I
LEARNED THINGS.

HE BELIEVED
THE GENERAL HAD
MURDERED A YOUNG
WOMAN. AN
ACTRESS.

AND NOW HE
IS RESPONSIBLE
FOR A STRING
OF CHILD
ABDUCTIONS.



WHAT CHILD
ABDUCTIONS?
TALK FAST,
LOONIE.

NOT
HERE.

WE DON'T
WANT SARAH
TO SEE THIS.



GEE WHIZ!
I MISSED
THE PARTY,
DIDN'T I?

WE MADE
A NEW FRIEND.
A NEW, WEIRD
FRIEND.

LISTEN UP,
DOC. ENOUGH
MESSING AROUND.
TELL ME ABOUT
THESE
KIDS.

SEE FOR
YOURSELVES. THE
PAPERS ONLY REPORT
THE RICH ONES. BUT
THERE ARE MORE.
MANY MORE.

DAILY BUGLE
**ANOTHER CHILD MISSING
SON OF STARK
VANISHES**
Police Blame Communist Agitators



HE'S TAKING
CHILDREN?
DEAR LORD.

ONE
MOMENT.
I HADN'T
SEEN THIS
OTHER
STORY.

**MASSACRE IN
WEST VIRGINIA**
**167 Residents of
Dark Willow Slain**



THAT...
THAT'S MY
TOWN.

MY MOTHER
IS DEAD. THE
GIRL I LIKED
IS DEAD.

EVERYONE
I KNOW IS
DEAD.



YOUR
TOWN? WHAT
CAN IT
MEAN?

IT MEANS
I OWE THE
GENERAL A
HOUSE
CALL.

ELSEWHERE.

YOU'VE DONE WELL, GENERAL. THE MASSACRE IN DARK WILLOW PROVED A SACRIFICE OF SUFFICIENT STRENGTH.

IT ALLOWED ME TO REGAIN MY FORM. AND NOW, YOUR LATEST WORK... THIS WILL ALLOW US TO DO SO MUCH MORE.

I HAVE A GIFT FOR YOU.

IT IS NOT THE EQUAL OF THE AMULET, BUT IT WILL GIVE YOU THE MEANS TO COMBAT ITS POWER.

WE MUST BE READY WHEN THIS MAN WITH THE POWER OF ACHILLES COMES FOR YOU. WE MUST BE PREPARED...





...FOR THE GREATEST SACRIFICE IS TO COME ON SUMMER SOLSTICE.

IT MUST BE THAT NIGHT IF MY FULL POWERS ARE TO BE RESTORED.

AND LONG BEFORE THAT DAY, YOU WILL HAVE CRUSHED THESE MYSTERY MEN, AND THE AMULET WILL BE BACK IN OUR CONTROL.

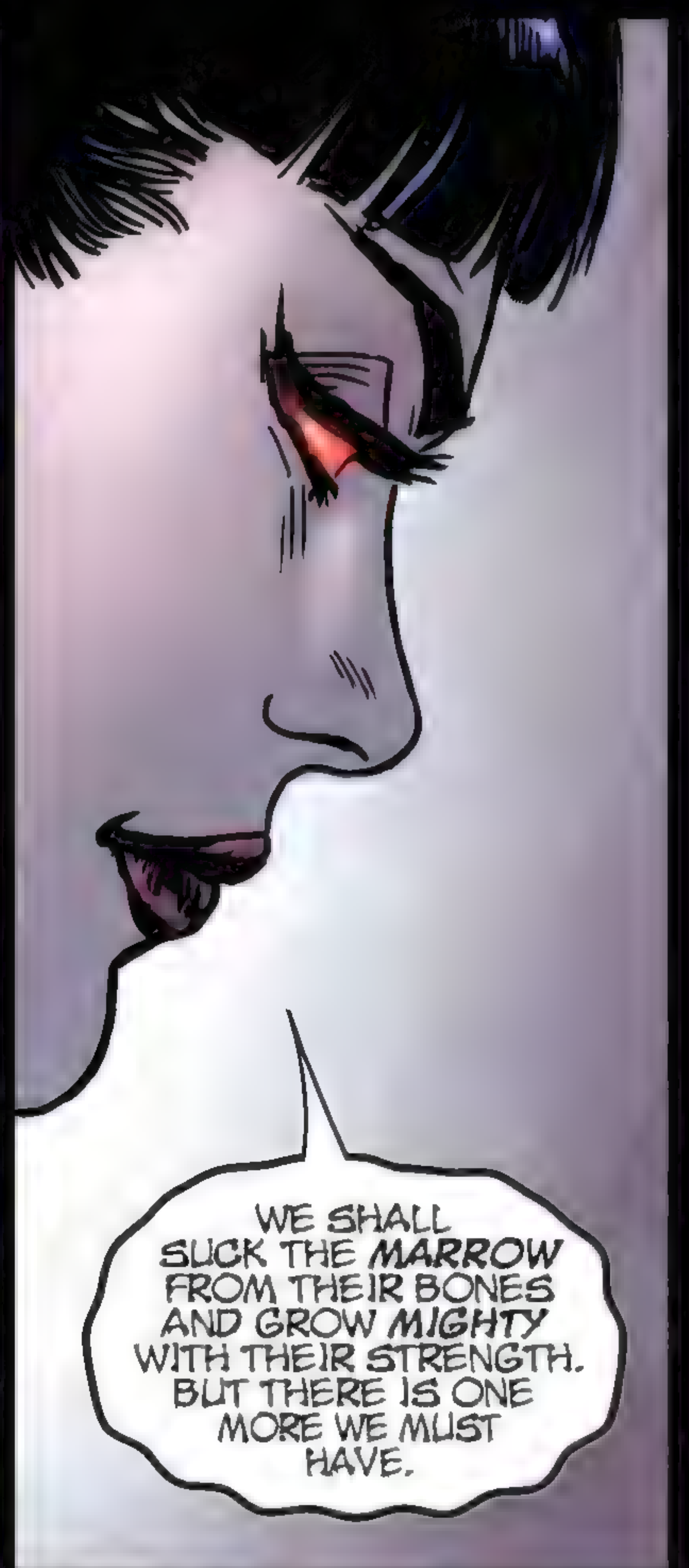


NOX, HOW WILL I FIND GREEN AND THE OTHERS? HOW WILL I FIND THE AMULET?

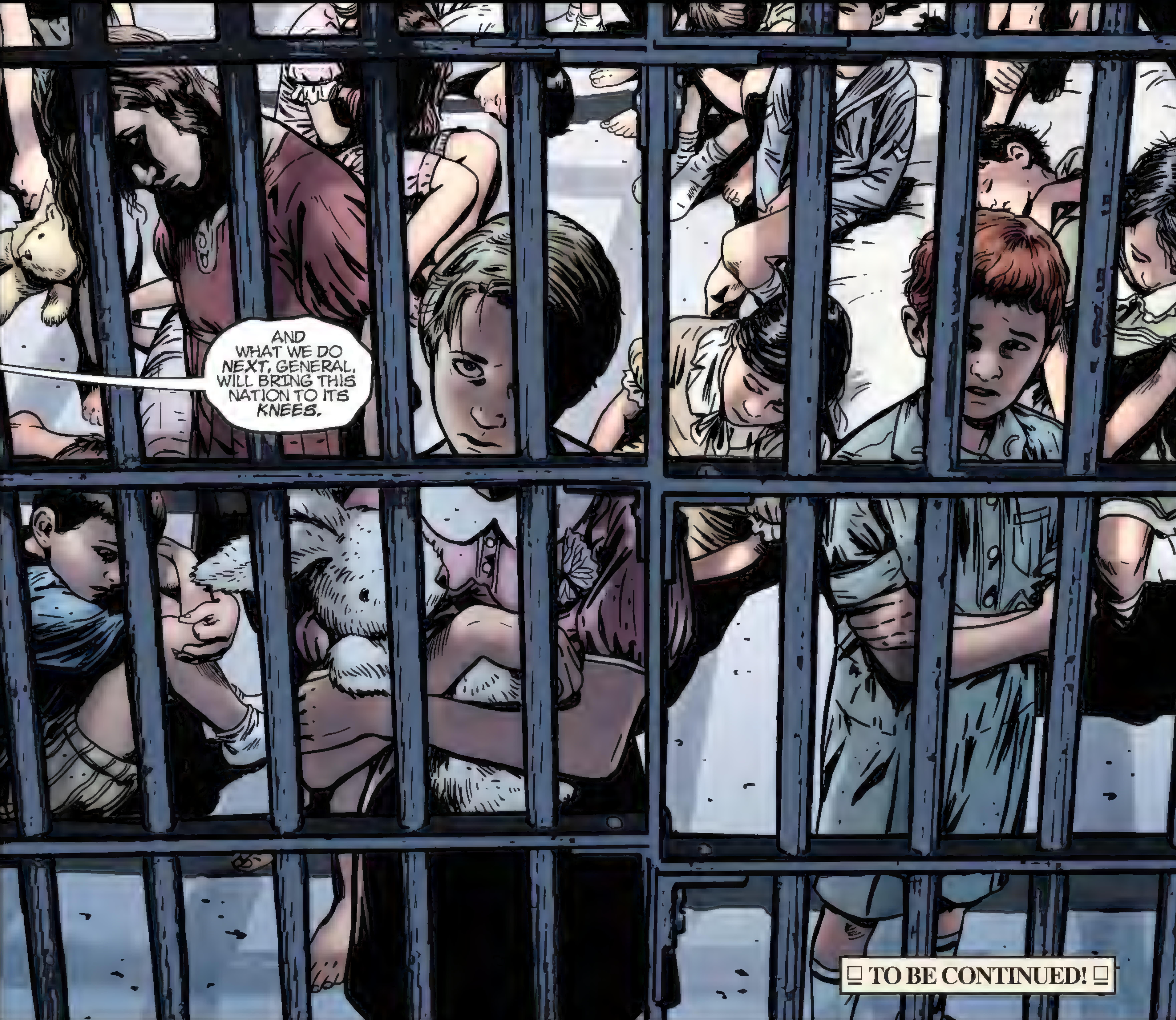
YOU NEED NOT WORRY.

AFTER THE AUDACITY OF WHAT YOU DO NEXT, THEY WILL COME LOOKING FOR YOU.

THEY WILL ALL COME...AND YOU SHALL BE PREPARED TO DESTROY THEM.



WE SHALL SUCK THE MARROW FROM THEIR BONES AND GROW MIGHTY WITH THEIR STRENGTH. BUT THERE IS ONE MORE WE MUST HAVE.



AND WHAT WE DO NEXT, GENERAL, WILL BRING THIS NATION TO ITS KNEES.

□ TO BE CONTINUED! □

The
OP

DATE JULY 13	INVESTIGATOR Patrick Zircher	CASE FILE MM 003
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The Surgeon's horrifying origin and modus operandi (getting what he wants out of the bad guys with scalpels and syringes) places him on the edge of being a hero, on the edge of sanity for that matter. We wanted a look that represented that: the scarred tissue around his eyes, the bandages, the ragged and stitched cloak, and gurney restraints for wristbands. The white doctor's coat adds a weird chill to his look as well. For a color scheme, blood red seemed exactly right for the cloak. And just what's in those glowing green syringes? Don't ask.



Achilles underwent a lot of change in development. Initially a mild-mannered young Professor who transforms into a classic Greek warrior, he was to have a

Greek helmet, spear, chest plate, and so forth. The spear and helmet never really took and the first designs were appropriate but didn't feel 'pulp.' So we re-imagined his transformation. Armed with a sword and shield, Achilles' armor was replaced with a bold shirt and logo and footballer's trousers. His hairstyle now more Buster Crabbe than historical hero. All in all, a costume influenced by the young, meek Professor's love of history but also the wish-fulfillment of the mighty pulps. He



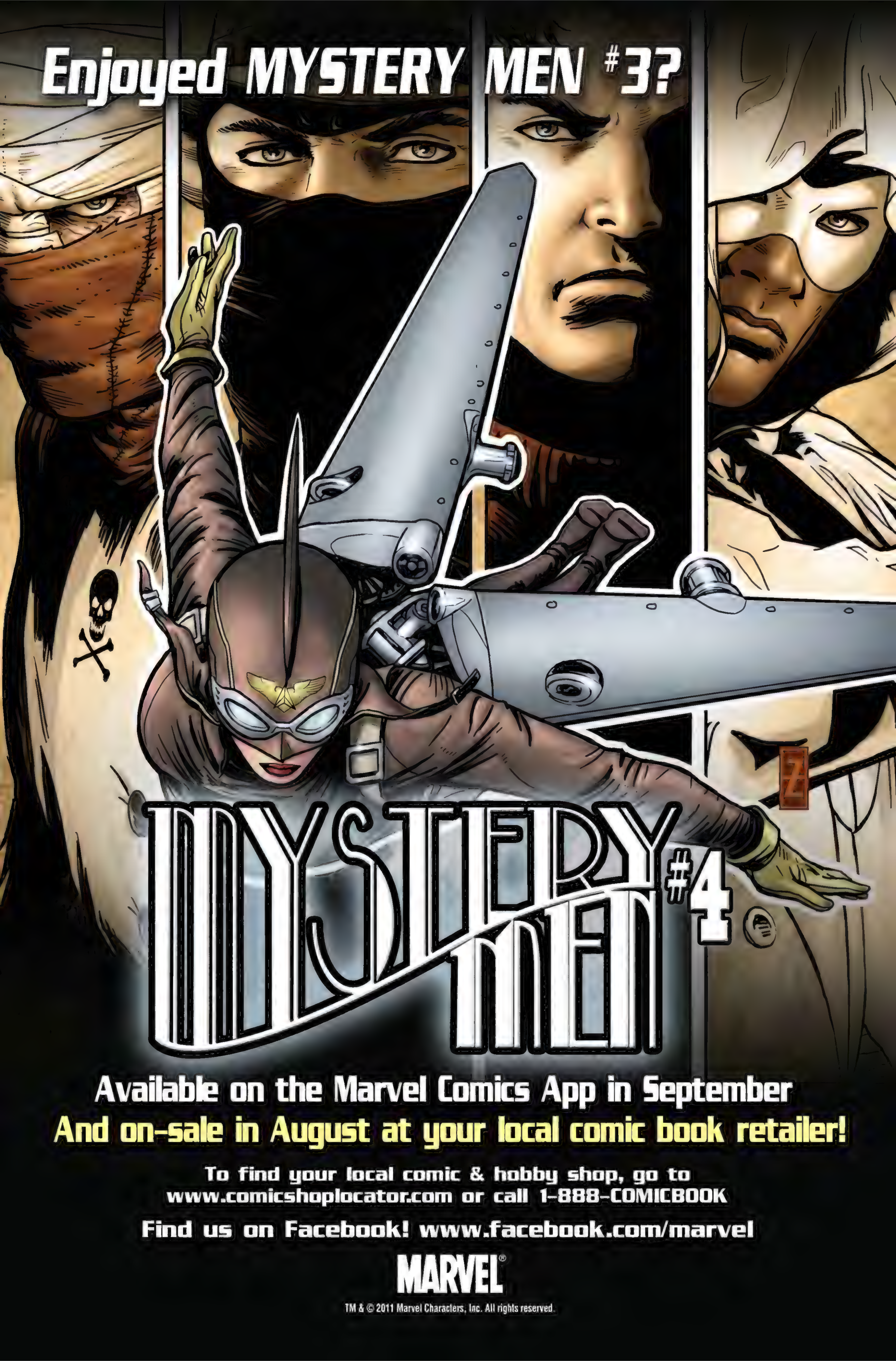
undergoes a transformation into not just a warrior but an adventurer as well.



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To try and convey

Enjoyed MYSTERY MEN #3?



MYSTERY MEN #4

**Available on the Marvel Comics App in September
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MARVEL
LIMITED SERIES
4 of 5

"INSANELY GOOD."
-MTV GEEK!

MYSTERY MAN



DAVID LISS
PATRICK ZIRCHER
ANDY TROY

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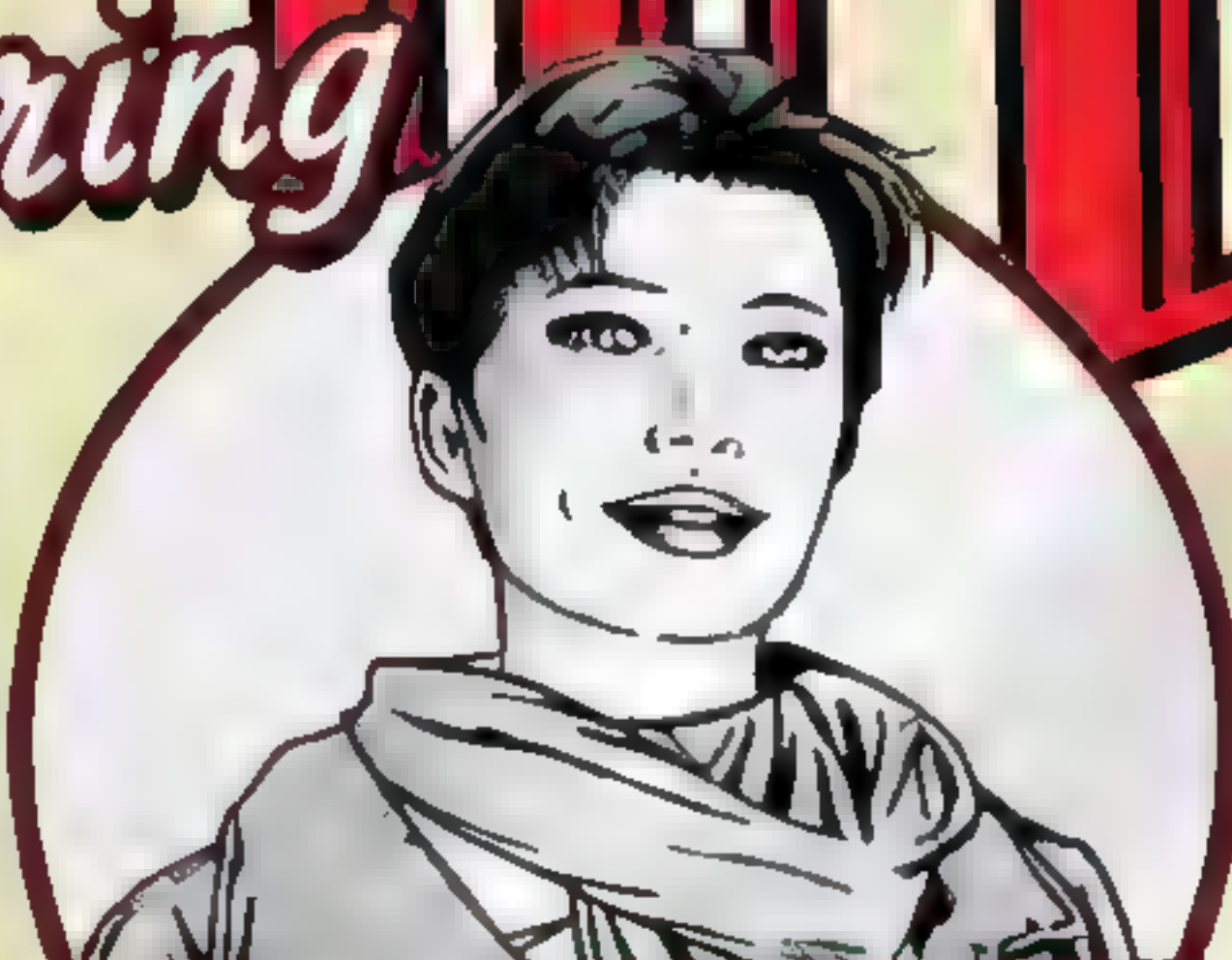
MYSTERY MEN

Starring

and



DENNIS PIPER
AKA
THE OPERATIVE



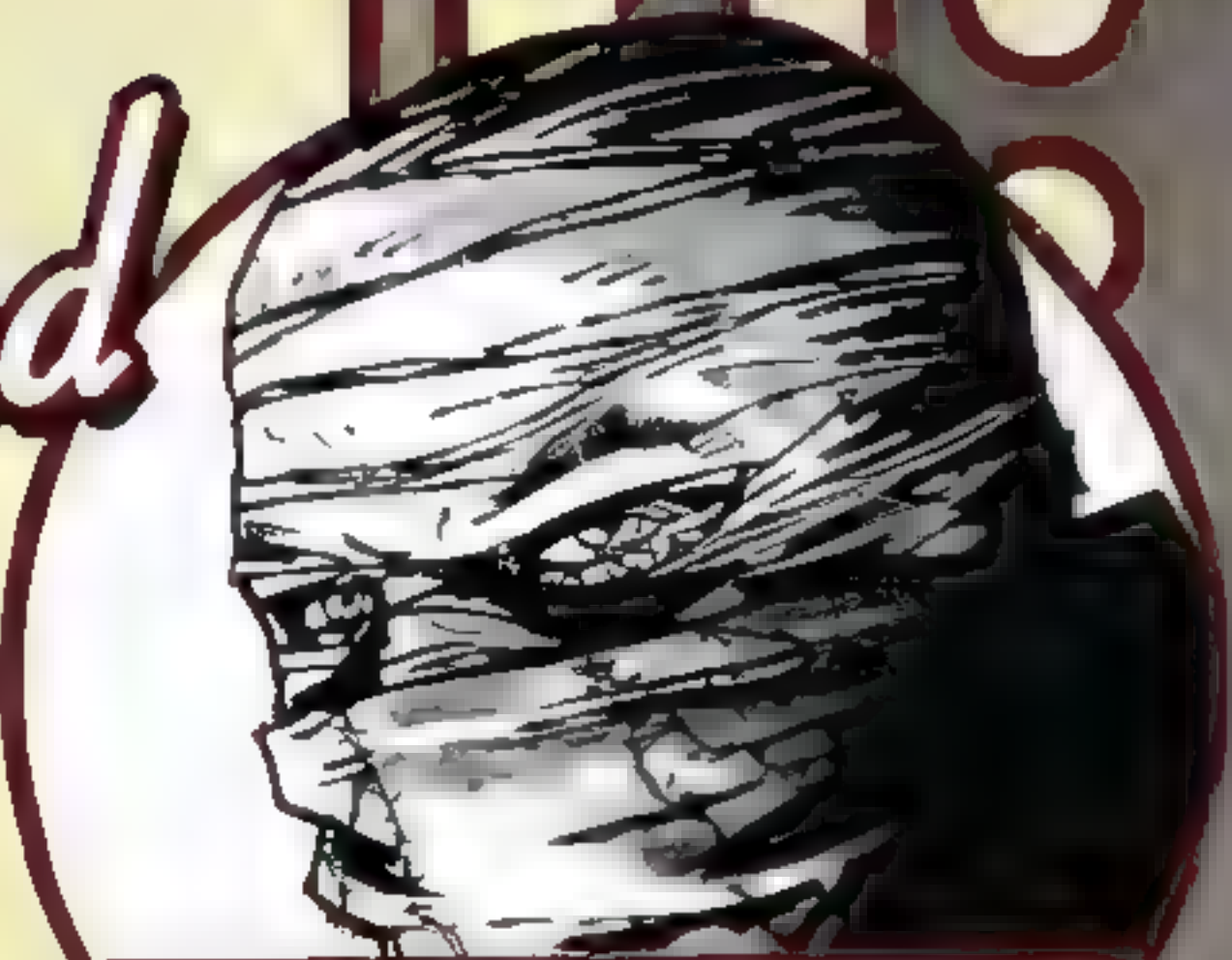
SARAH STARR
AKA
THE AVIATRIX



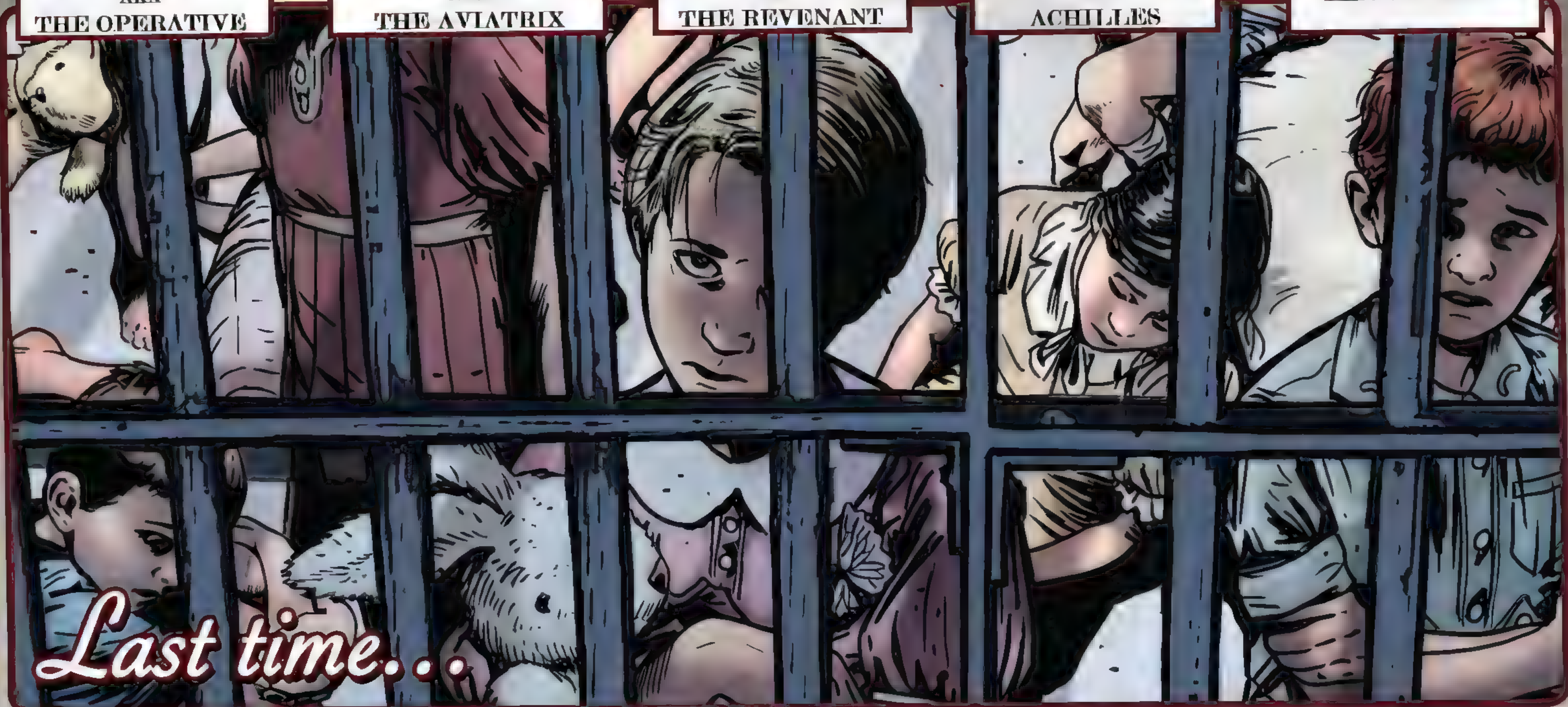
EZEKIEL WRIGHT
AKA
THE REVENANT



PROF. LEWIS GREEN
AKA
ACHILLES



THE SURGEON



Last time...

The year is 1932 and the Great Depression has spread panic across the streets of Manhattan. Benefitting from the city's sufferance is The Board, an alliance of the rich and powerful lead by a man known only as The General, who has made a pact to return the demonic fear lord Nox to its true form. In exchange, he has been promised the unimaginable power contained in an ancient amulet once worn by the Greek hero Achilles. Unfortunately for The General, the archeologist he sent to recover the amulet - Professor Lewis Green - has taken control of the amulet and its powers for himself.

Meanwhile, Dennis Piper - masquerading as the cat thief known as The Operative - and his band of costumed vigilantes, which include Sarah Starr (a.k.a. The Aviatrice) and the mystical showman The Revenant, seek to bring The General to justice for the murder of Alice Starr, who was Sarah's sister and Piper's girlfriend. Joining the band of crime fighters is the demented Surgeon who, after being horribly disfigured, has also made it his mission to right the wrongs of The General.

Meanwhile, The General has made good on his promise and returned Nox to full strength...and the duo has now set into motion plans to sacrifice children to achieve ultimate power.

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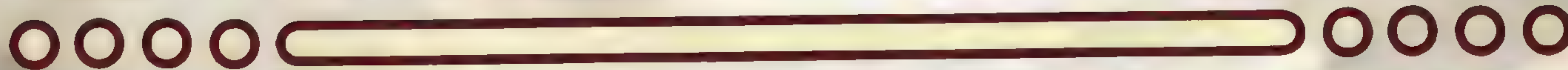
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□ EAST AMWELL, NEW JERSEY. □

□ THE HOME OF COLONEL □
CHARLES LINDBERGH.

Out there lurks a *monster* that takes children in the night. No one knows why. No one knows who.

No one but me.

Charles Lindbergh, America's greatest hero. Even he isn't safe.

Lindbergh's son is gone. The entire nation is grieving for this missing child...and the F.B.I. don't have a clue.

My name is Lewis Green. I used to be an archeologist. I used to be *happy*.

A man who calls himself The General sent me to the ruins of Troy in search of an artifact.

I HATE TO KEEP PUTTING YOU THROUGH THIS, COLONEL LINDBERGH, BUT MAYBE WE CAN FIND SOMETHING WE MISSED LAST TIME.

It took me months, but I found it, all right. The General rewarded my success by taking away *everything* that mattered to me.

I still have the artifact... an *amulet* with amazing and *dangerous* power.

The General ruined my life, and I mean to *return the favor*. Of course, the fact that The General is *kidnapping children* only adds fuel to my fire.

The newspapers only cared about the children from *important* families. But I don't distinguish. I'll find all the children...pay *any price*.

Impersonating a federal agent means *nothing* to me.

I DON'T THINK I'VE SEEN YOUR MUG BEFORE. YOU NEW?

IN SOME WAYS, YEAH... I GUESS I AM NEW.

AND IN SOME WAYS, VERY OLD.

The Achilles amulet gives me power, but at an *awful* price. Each time I use it to help someone, it costs me a year of my life. Unless I *kill* someone and take their life force.

A terrible burden...and temptation.

THERE'S SOMETHING *FISHY* HERE. OKAY, AGENT CRYPTIC, LET ME SEE YOUR HANDS.



I'M NOT YOUR ENEMY. PLEASE...DON'T MAKE ME FIGHT YOU.



I LIKE IT WHEN THEIR VEINS ARE EASY TO FIND.

He seems to come from a *nightmare*. This man *horrifies* me.

And yet, there's something about him, something that makes me feel like I'm where I'm *supposed* to be.

I'VE BEEN WATCHING YOU, PROFESSOR GREEN. I KNOW WHO YOU ARE AND WHAT YOU CAN DO.

AND I KNOW WE ARE AFTER THE SAME MAN.

O'DONNELL, EVERYTHING PEACHY UP THERE?

MY DIAGNOSIS: A FEEBLE MIND, LEADING TO *FAULTY* DETECTIVE WORK.

THIS OPERATION IS CONCLUDED... LET'S SCRUB DOWN AND COMPARE NOTES.

He calls himself *The Surgeon*. He tells me how The General is responsible for *mutilating* him--for killing *everyone* in his home town.

It's a horrible story, but it doesn't surprise me. Whatever The General touches *wither*s and *dies*.

I tell him things too, such as the *COST* of using the Achilles amulet.

ALL MEDICINES HAVE THEIR *SIDE EFFECTS*. DON'T HOLD YOURSELF BACK, PROFESSOR GREEN.

THESE *MYSTERY MEN* YOU READ ABOUT IN THE PAPERS--THEY SENT ME AWAY. THEY DIDN'T LIKE MY *METHODS*.

I ADMIRE THEM, BUT THEY'RE TOO WORRIED ABOUT THE PAIN OF THE PROCEDURE... NOT WORRIED ENOUGH ABOUT THE *CURE*.

THEY'LL COME AROUND. IN THE END THEY'LL SEE THAT BEING *SQUEAMISH* ONLY GETS MORE PEOPLE HURT.

He takes me to the apartment of one of the members of The General's Board.

He says he will *show* me. He'll allow me to show *myself*.

But I keep asking myself if this stuffed shirt's *miserable, greedy* existence is worth a year of my life.

IT'S A TRAP! HE'S SETTING A TRAP FOR YOU. ALL OF YOU!

YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND WHAT HE IS! YOU CAN NEVER COMPREHEND HIM!

ANYTHING YOU THINK OF, HE'S THOUGHT OF IT *FIRST*.

AND YOUR FRIENDS, THE OTHER *MYSTERY MEN*--HE'S NOT TAKING ANY CHANCES WITH THEM. THEY'RE AS GOOD AS DEAD.

□ NEW YORK CITY. □
DAYS LATER.

Before all this began, we
were not *these people*.
We could never have
done *these things*.

Maybe that's
why we
wear *masks*.

A BIG MANLY
FELLA LIKE YOU SURE
IS *HEAVY*. I THINK YOU'D
BETTER START TALKING
BEFORE MY DELICATE
FINGERS GIVE WAY.

I'M TELLIN'
YA, I DON'T
KNOW
NOTHIN'!

We cover
our faces,
hide our old
selves, and
become
something
else.

We do what
needs to
be done.

WHOOOPS.

AAAAAAAA!

HO-HUM.

We have no
choice.

ARE YOU
ABSOLUTELY
SURE YOU DON'T
KNOW WHERE THE
GENERAL IS
HIDING OUT?

We abandon
the luxuries
of *mercy*
and *pity*.

High above us, a beautiful woman--an inventor, a *genius*--toys with a man's life.

Down here, things are even *more brutal*.

WHERE'D HE GO? HE VANISHED!

But I can't close my eyes. I can't pretend not to *know*.

I do what I *must*, because if I don't, *no one else* will.

BEHOLD! HERE I STAND, COMMANDING THE MYSTIC POWERS OF THE UNSEEN WORLD!

AND YOU ARE GOING TO TELL ME *EVERYTHING* YOU KNOW ABOUT THE GENERAL!

I've joined forces with a man who must also find it within himself to do *terrible* things.

THIS ONE DOESN'T KNOW *ANYTHING*. I DON'T THINK THEY'RE PAYING THESE GUYS ENOUGH TO DUMMY UP AFTER THE WORK OVER I GAVE HIM.

And I watch while a woman I admire discovers within herself a *darkness* she'd never before known.

PERHAPS SARAH IS HAVING BETTER LUCK.

Not because it is right, but because it is *necessary*. I celebrate her discovery.

UHHHH...

HE'S GOT A PLACE, OKAY? I HEARD ABOUT IT! JUST PLEASE DON'T LET THE CRAZY FLYING DAME TAKE ME!

Even while I mourn her loss of innocence...even while I mourn *my own*...

I look at the violence and wonder how I came to wear this costume, to do these things. But, of course, I already know.

Once, I was a magician's apprentice. That's how I met Alice Starr. Six months before her career took off. Six months before The General killed her. Six months before her sister, The Operative and I set out to avenge her.

In those days, I'd run through my boss's tricks, and he'd watch from the audience, deciding what worked and what didn't.

YOU MOVE TOO SLOW, BOY. SPEED THINGS UP. IF I SHUFFLED LIKE THAT, THE AUDIENCE WOULD FALL ASLEEP.

DON'T LISTEN TO HIM, EZEKIEL. HE'S JEALOUS BECAUSE HE KNOWS YOU'RE BETTER.

I *was* better. It wasn't arrogance, just truth. I was good, and I wanted my shot at the *big time*.

But I never forced the issue. I'd seen too many friends from my neighborhood ruined, broken, or jailed, because they dared to demand their share of the pie.

MAYBE I COULD DO A FEW TRICKS BEFORE YOU COME OUT, MR. PORTER. NOTHING TOO FLASHY, OF COURSE.

FORGET IT. BROADWAY DOESN'T WANT A NEGRO MAGICIAN. AND, OF COURSE, IT WOULD VIOLATE YOUR CONTRACT WERE YOU TO PERFORM FOR YOUR OWN KIND IN HARLEM. SO, YOU'RE STUCK HERE WITH ME.

Not all magicians were like Porter, and we often gathered in our favorite speakeasy. We were united by a *brotherhood*, and that mattered more than skin color.

For most of us, anyhow. It turned out that *one* of them didn't like that a Negro was friends with Alice, and he spoke to a cop buddy of his.

THAT'S NOT TOO LOUSY. IN MY COSTUME, WHY, I CAN ALMOST IMAGINE YOU ARE ME.

IS THAT THE GUY WHO PAWED YOU, TOOTS?

I TOLD YOU, HE TALKED GERMAN OR ITALIAN OR SOMETHING. ALL FOREIGN-LIKE. IT WASN'T NO COLORED GUY.

OFFICER, YOU HEARD THE WOMAN SAY IT WASN'T ME. WHY ARE YOU DOING THIS?

A COLORED GUY WHO LIKES TO DRINK WITH WHITE WOMEN IS ALWAYS GUILTY OF SOMETHIN'.

YOU SEE, DOLL FACE? ANOTHER MENACE TO OUR FAIR CITY APPREHENDED. I THINK A GLASS OF WHISKEY IS IN--HUH?



CUFFS ON AN
ESCAPE ARTIST?
VERY CLEVER. I
GUESS YOU WERE
DRUNK FOR THAT
LESSON AT THE
ACADEMY.

My whole life I'd watched
while innocent men
disappeared down the
rabbit hole of courts and jails.

I used what I had...
did what I *had* to.

They put me
outside the law.

I could *never* go back
home. I could *never*
return to my job. In a
moment of senseless
spite, one cop had
destroyed my life.

That *wasn't*
going to be me.

I could cower in fear,
or I could *take*
a stand. I could use
the skills I'd worked
hard to obtain, and I
could cloak myself in
the anonymity they
had forced upon me.

I chose to
stand for
justice.

DON'T BE NAIVE, ROOKIE. THESE ARE A
COUPLE OF REEFER-HEADS FOR SURE.
YOU CAN'T LET THE MOMMY AND
DADDY ACT FOOL YOU.



Children have been disappearing for weeks, and we've learned from another vigilante, a creep called The Surgeon, that The General is behind it.

Now we *finally* have a lead on where to look. We're going to take the fight to him.

IT DON'T MATTER WHAT I TELL YOU. YOU AIN'T GETTING OUT OF HERE.

EXPLAIN YOURSELF.

SARAH!

YOU SHALL NOT HARM--

THANKS, GENTS, BUT I'M A BIG GIRL. I CAN TAKE CARE OF MYSELF.

ARE YOU SURE YOU'RE ALL RIGHT?

EZEKIEL, MY SHOE PRACTICALLY CAME OUT OF HIS NOSE. BUT IT'S SWEET OF YOU TO WORRY.

NICE MOVE, GIRLIE, FOR ALL THE GOOD IT WILL DO.

WHEN YOU WALK OUT THAT DOOR, THERE ARE THREE DOZEN GUYS WAITING TO BEAT YOU ALL TO A PULP. YOU WANT THE GENERAL? THEY'RE GOING TO SERVE YOU TO HIM ON A PLATTER. LIKE ASPIC. IF YOU KNOW WHAT THAT IS.

I MAKE A DELICIOUS DUCK ASPIC. I'M PRETTY HANDY IN THE KITCHEN, ON TOP OF MY OTHER IMPRESSIVE SKILLS. MAKES ME QUITE A CATCH, DON'T YOU THINK?

SURE, BUT HOW DO YOU CATCH A GHOST?

STICK TIGHT WHILE I SCOPE THINGS OUT, FELLAS.



DEAR
GOD...

We heard
nothing, and
yet so much
death...

Who or what could have killed all these men without firing a weapon or making noise? I have my tricks, The Operative is an amazing fighter, and Sarah can fly...



But we're just people in masks. That's *all* we are. And for the first time, I begin to think we're not equal to the challenges that lie ahead.



□ THE GENERAL'S HIDEOUT. □
WESTCHESTER, NEW YORK.





YOU ORDER ME TO TEND TO YOU LIKE I AM YOUR BUTLER, NOX. I'LL NOT STAND FOR IT!



GENERAL, I AM ONE OF THE FEAR LORDS, MORE POWERFUL THAN YOU CAN KNOW. IF I MAKE YOU MY SERVANT, I WILL BE DOING YOU A GREAT HONOR.

NOW ATTEND ME. THEY ARE COMING... JUST AS WE PLANNED.

TONIGHT YOU WILL REGAIN WHAT IS YOURS.

I CANNOT WAIT MUCH LONGER.

~KOFF~
KOFF~ I NEED THE AMULET IF I AM TO LIVE.

NOW COMES THE TIME FOR YOU TO USE THE GIFT I'VE GIVEN YOU.

SEE HOW IT CHANGES YOU. IT WILL MAKE YOU THE STUFF OF LEGEND.



YOU
BECOME
STRONG...

YOU BECOME
LYSSEUS.

BUT THERE
IS MORE. SO
MUCH MORE.



COME WITH
ME. I WILL
SHOW YOU.

YOU WON'T
BE FIGHTING
ALONE.

SNIFF...
SNIFF...



THEY ARE
VILE... TERRIBLE...
BEAUTIFUL.

THEY ARE MY
CHILDREN. THEIR
FATHER WAS A
MIGHTY LOVER...
LIKE YOU.

AND LIKE
YOU, THEY WILL
DESTROY MY
ENEMIES.



THIS IS THE HOUSE THE BOOTLEGGER TOLD US ABOUT. THERE'S ALWAYS THE CHANCE THIS IS A TRAP...

BUT ONLY ONE WAY TO FIND OUT.

KEEP YOUR EYES ON THE GROUND, ZEKE. ALICE DOESN'T NEED YOU PEEPING AT HER EVERY 30 SECONDS.

I KNOW MY RESPONSIBILITIES. HAVE NO FEAR.

...

AND ALICE WAS HER SISTER. OUR COLLEAGUE'S NAME IS SARAH.

I understand his pain. Sarah looks so much like Alice, and The Operative had loved her. But I don't like how it's beginning to affect him.

Especially not now that I feel sure we're in the right place.

But maybe the right place is somewhere we have no business being.

We're just *mystery men*. No real powers, just vigilantes in *masks*.

And we now know we're up against something far beyond our experience, far beyond our *understanding*.

HELLO... SON.



AS YOU CAN SEE, I'VE CHANGED. I'M EVEN STRONGER THAN WHEN I KILLED YOUR GIRL.

BUT YOU ARE THE SAME WEAKLING.

AND YOUR NEW FRIENDS WILL BE JUST AS DEAD AS SHE IS.



ESPECIALLY THIS ONE. IT'S SO RARE YOU HAVE A CHANCE TO KILL SIBLINGS.



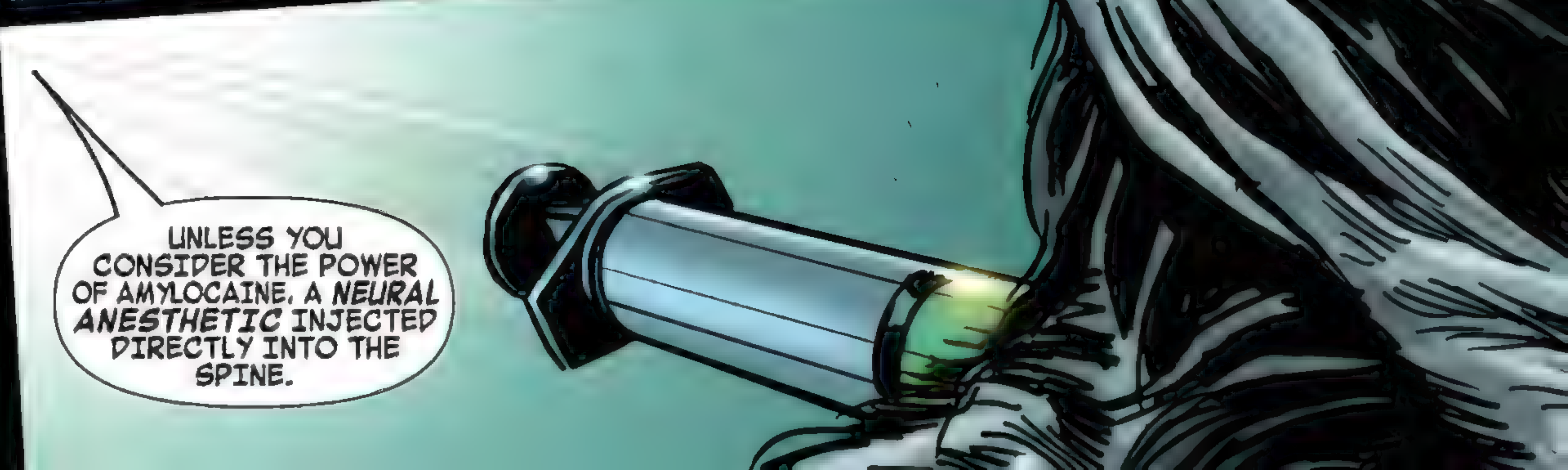
A LITTLE OLD FOR MY TASTE, BUT I THINK I WILL ENJOY HER BEFORE SHE IS SACRIFICED.



I DON'T SAY THESE THINGS TO BE CRUEL, BOY. I WANT YOU TO UNDERSTAND MY DISAPPOINTMENT.

I TRIED TO GIVE YOU EVERYTHING. I TRAINED YOU TO THINK, FIGHT, AND SURVIVE. BUT I ALWAYS KNEW IT WOULD COME TO THIS.

SINCE THE DAY YOU WERE BORN, I KNEW THE TIME WOULD COME WHEN I WOULD HAVE TO KILL YOU. AND NO POWER IN THE WORLD CAN STOP ME.



UNLESS YOU CONSIDER THE POWER OF AMYLOCAINE, A NEURAL ANESTHETIC INJECTED DIRECTLY INTO THE SPINE.

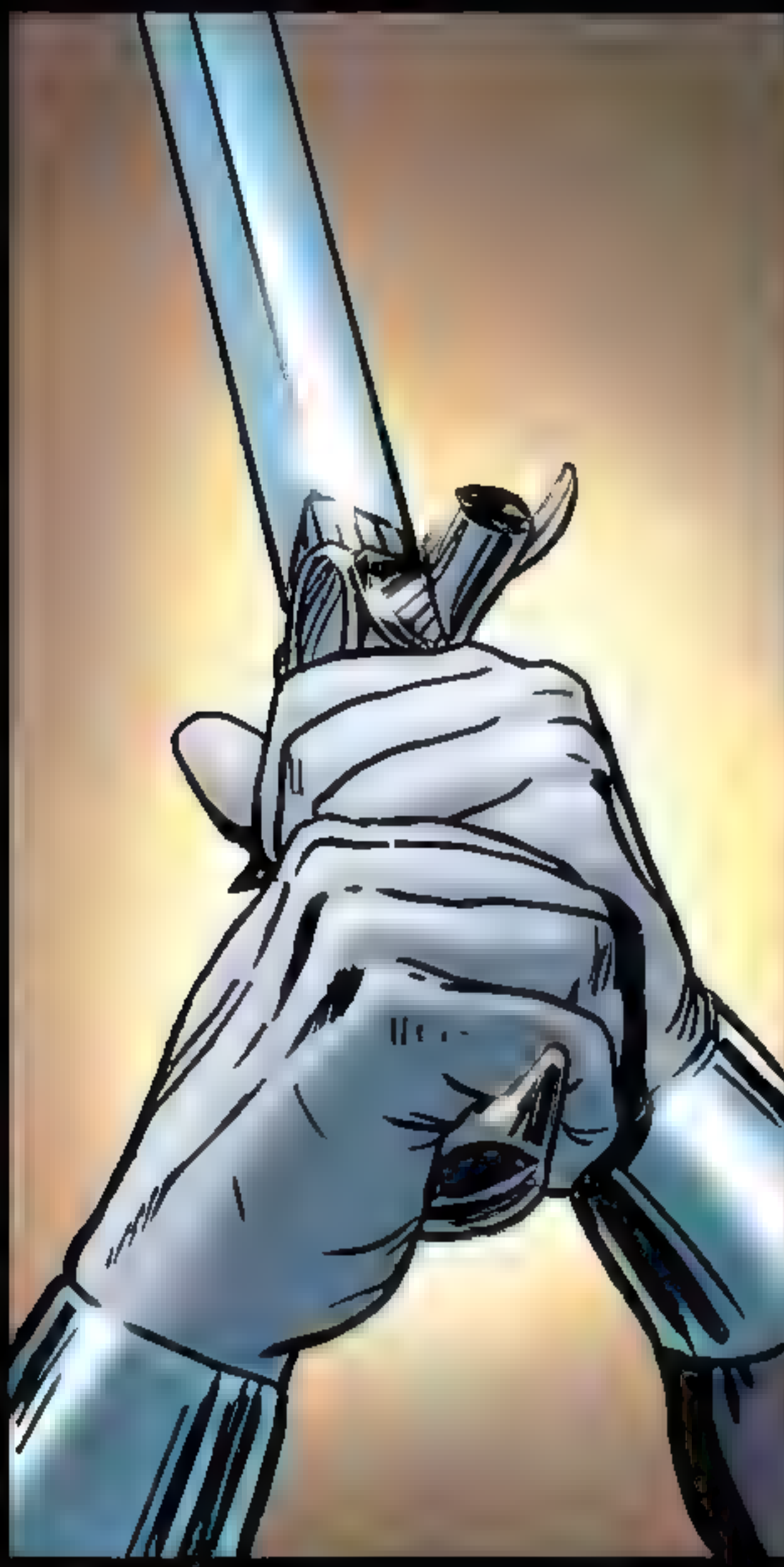


DO NOT
MIX WITH
ALCOHOL.

The Surgeon. We want nothing to do with his brutality. I don't know who the other man is, but if he's friends with that fiend, he's probably a whole lot of trouble.

But we need some trouble, so long as the trouble is on *our* side.





The General transformed
into some kind of *beast*...

And now... *this*.
What are we fighting?

MEET MY
OFFSPRING,
SIBED OF
CERBERUS!

NOW THEY
SHALL FEAST
ON YOUR LIVERS
AND LICK YOUR
BONES
CLEAN!





THERE ARE
TOO MANY FOR ME
TO PROTECT YOU.
YOU'VE GOT TO
RUN!

BUT THE
MISSING CHILDREN
ARE HERE. I KNOW
THEY ARE!

YOU CAN'T
SAVE THEM IF
YOU'RE DEAD.
SURGEON, GET
THEM OUT OF
HERE!



I'LL HOLD
OFF THESE
MONSTERS
AS BEST
I CAN.





WELL, WELL, WELL...PROFESSOR GREEN. YOU **STOLE** WHAT WAS MINE. IT APPEARS YOU HAVE BEEN USING IT QUITE A BIT, TOO. YOU THOUGHT OF IT AS YOUR OWN, AND YOU USED IT **AGAINST** ME.

BUT NOW IT SHALL BE AROUND MY NECK, AS IT WAS ALWAYS **MEANT** TO BE, AND I SHALL BECOME **ACHILLES**.



D-DON'T THINK YOU UNDERSTAND HOW THIS **AMULET** WORKS...

...**POWER**... RESERVES OF **POWER**...IF I CAN JUST **TAP** INTO IT...



H-HURRY!
I SLOWED
THEM DOWN,
BUT...

I...I HAVE
NOTHING
LEFT...



THOSE POOR
CHILDREN. WE WERE
SO CLOSE.

WE'LL COME
BACK, SARAH. I
SWEAR. WE'LL FIGURE
OUT HOW TO FIGHT
THESE THINGS, AND
WE'LL SAVE
THOSE KIDS.

WHO IS
THIS BIRD? IS
HE OKAY?

HE IS **ACHILLES**,
AND I THINK HE'LL
RECOVER. LOOKS LIKE
HE FOUND THE **LIMITS**
OF HIS POWER
TONIGHT.

PROBABLY
BE SOOTHING
FOR HIM TO KILL
SOMEONE VERY
SOON.

THE
TRICK IS FINDING
THE **RIGHT** PERSON.
THAT'S ALWAYS
THE TRICK.



We return later, after I scout ahead and find the house abandoned. The General and those monsters are long gone. So are the children, but they had *been there*.



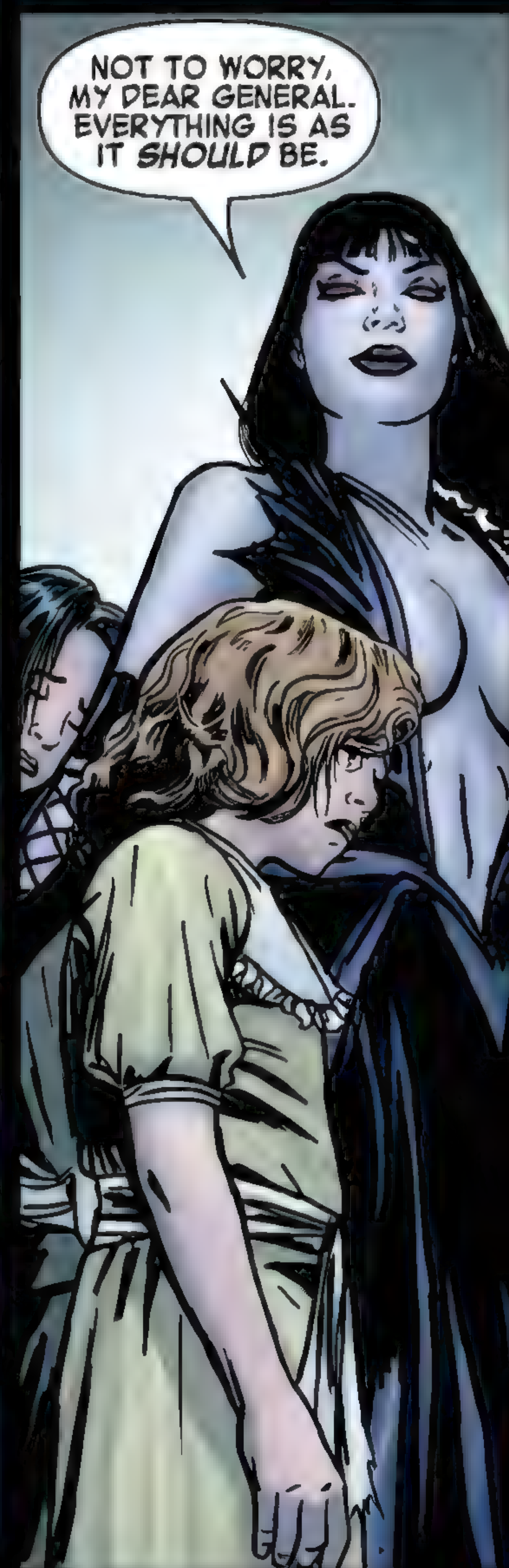
We missed our chance, and we cannot convince ourselves we'll ever have another.

I AM MYSELF AGAIN, BUT I DON'T FEEL RIGHT. MY MIND IS...MUDDLED.

I-I CAN'T REMOVE THE BRACELET.



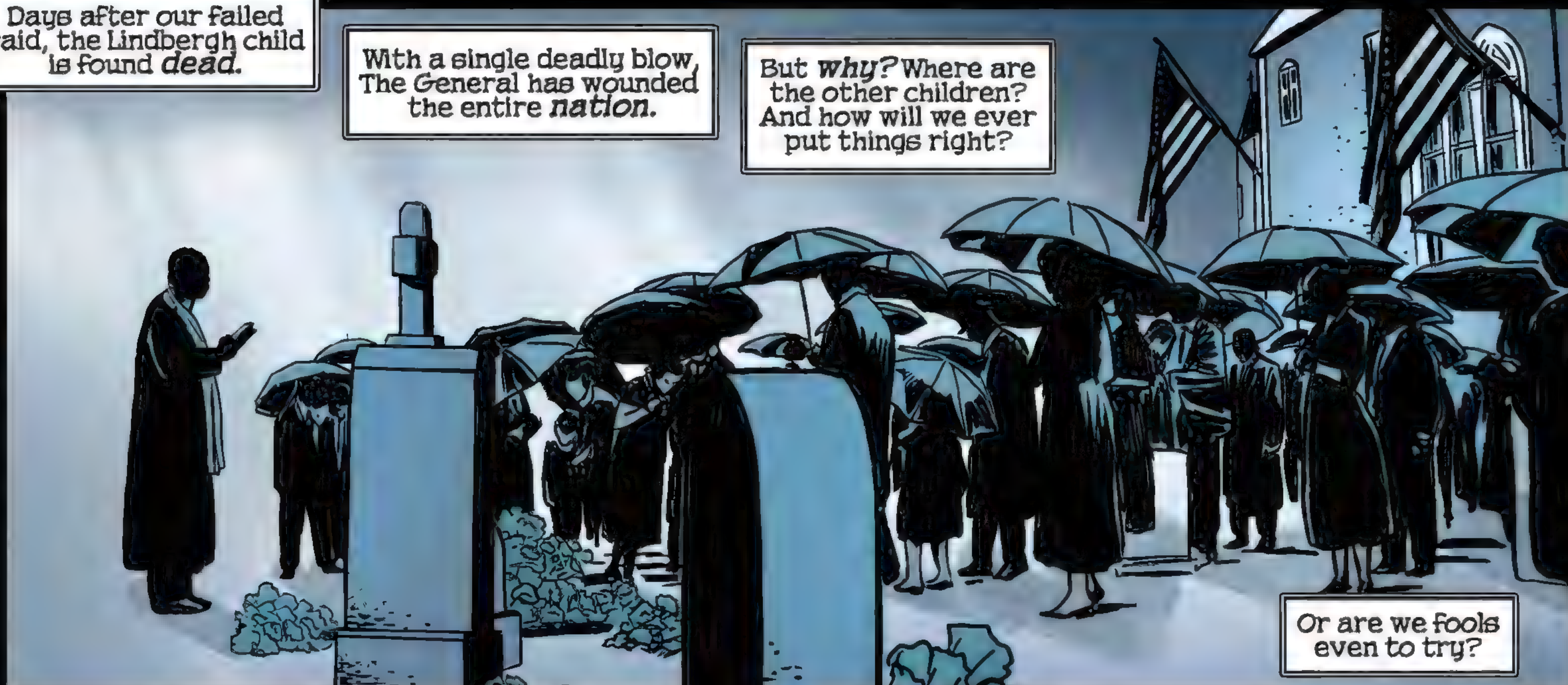
NOT TO WORRY, MY DEAR GENERAL. EVERYTHING IS AS IT SHOULD BE.



Days after our failed raid, the Lindbergh child is found *dead*.

With a single deadly blow, The General has wounded the entire *nation*.

But *why*? Where are the other children? And how will we ever put things right?



Or are we fools even to try?

With the Depression raging, things have never been *worse* in this country. But the death of the Lindbergh child feels like too great a blow to *bear*.



What is left to hope for?

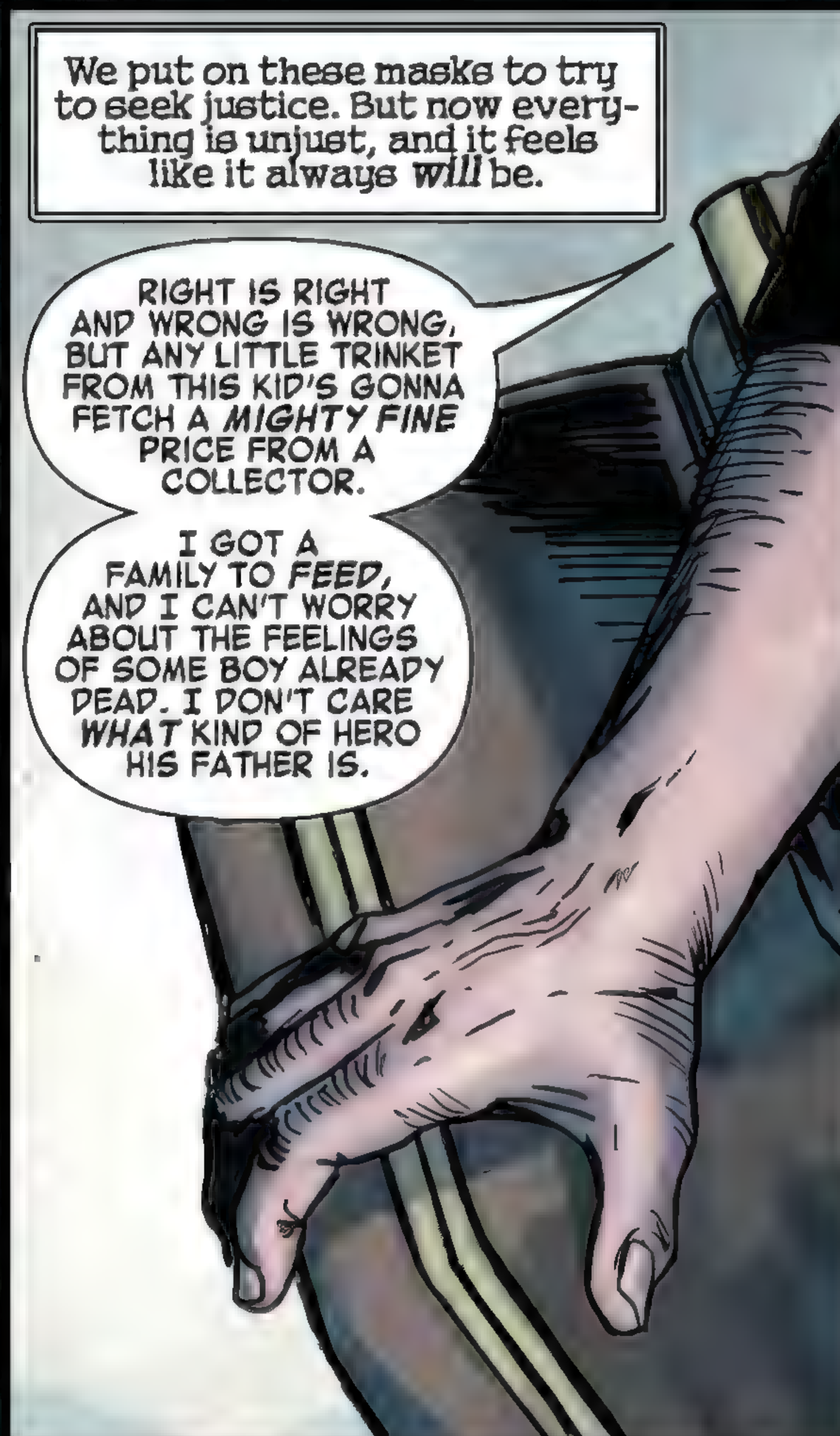


GET OUT OF THAT GRAVE. IT AIN'T RIGHT.

We put on these masks to try to seek justice. But now everything is unjust, and it feels like it always *will* be.

RIGHT IS RIGHT AND WRONG IS WRONG, BUT ANY LITTLE TRINKET FROM THIS KID'S GONNA FETCH A *MIGHTY FINE* PRICE FROM A COLLECTOR.

I GOT A FAMILY TO *FEED*, AND I CAN'T WORRY ABOUT THE FEELINGS OF SOME BOY ALREADY DEAD. I DON'T CARE WHAT KIND OF HERO HIS FATHER IS.



We need *something*. A lifeline. A reason to believe.



WHAT THE--?

WELL, IT AIN'T WHAT I EXPECTED, BUT I'LL TELL YOU WHAT. THE NEWSPAPERS WILL PAY A LOT OF SCRATCH FOR A STORY LIKE *THIS*.





PLEASE DON'T TOUCH THAT, YOU VILE PERSON. THE ILLUSION IS VERY FRESH, AND IT WILL FADE IF YOU TAMPER WITH THE ARRANGEMENT.



IT IS FOR THE BEST THIS WAY. THE SUMMER SOLSTICE IS NOT YET FOR ANOTHER MONTH, AND THE MYSTERY MEN DID MORE DAMAGE THAN I ANTICIPATED.

IT IS OUR MOST POWERFUL SACRIFICE, SO WE LOSE NOTHING IF THE WORLD BELIEVES THE CHILD ALREADY DEAD.



I STILL NEED THE ACHILLES AMULET. I MUST HAVE IT.

⌘KOFF...
KOFF...⌘



JUST ONE MORE MONTH, MY PET. ONE MORE.

THERE'S A GOOD FELLOW.



I...I AM A GOOD FELLOW.

SORRY TO DROP
BY UNINVITED, SARAH,
BUT CAN I COME IN?
WE NEED TO
TALK.

PIPER, IT'S
REALLY NOT A
GOOD TIME. MAYBE
TOMORROW
YOU CAN--

I KNOW YOU'RE
UPSET ABOUT YOUR
EQUIPMENT GETTING
WRECKED. I CAN HELP
PAY TO HAVE IT
REBUILT. WE CAN
FIGURE THAT OUT, BUT
WHAT I HAVE TO SAY
CAN'T WAIT.

IF WE'VE
LEARNED **ANYTHING**
IT'S THAT WE'RE UP
AGAINST THINGS WE
DON'T UNDERSTAND.
WE COULD BE **KILLED**
ANY TIME.

YOU'RE GOING
TO SAY I'M **CONFUSED**...
BUT I'M NOT. I KNOW YOU'RE
NOT YOUR SISTER. I KNOW
YOU'RE NOT ALICE.

I MISS HER.
I **LOVED** HER, AND
I'LL DO ANYTHING TO
BRING THAT **MONSTER**
WHO KILLED HER TO
JUSTICE, BUT THAT
DOESN'T CHANGE
HOW I FEEL ABOUT
YOU.

I GUESS
WHAT I'M TRYING
TO SAY--

LET ME TELL
YOU, SARAH, THE
WATER PRESSURE IS
A WHOLE LOT BETTER
DOWNTOWN THAN
LIPTOWN.

OH...

EZEKIEL,
IT'S--

I GUESS THIS
CONVERSATION
IS OVER.

I
GUESS
IT'S ALL
OVER.

□ TO BE □
CONCLUDED!

DATE AUGUST 24	INVESTIGATOR Patrick Zircher	CASE FILE MM 004
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Aviatrix, more than any of the character designs, was a collaborative effort between writer, editors, and artist. Because she is a female aviator, I looked to old photos of women pilots through history. They were actually quite the rage in the '20s and '30s and, like Amelia Earhart, several of them made the headlines. Aviatrix began with a jet pack which was later given wings to help differentiate her from the late Dave Steven's popular and much-loved hero, the Rocketeer. Former Editor-in-Chief (and current CCO) Joe Quesada even stepped in, suggesting a fin on her headgear.



Nox is a powerful character of mythic origin who has actual ties to Marvel's past in the pages of Dr. Strange. While she retained the color scheme of those earlier appearances, most everything else about her was changed to make her increasingly sinister and vampish. She flaunts social convention with her sensuous, sexy attire and, frankly, I can imagine her not bothering with clothes at all.

However...her dresses

are modified exaggerations of some of the dresses I found in old fashion books of the '30s and '40s.

NEXT ISSUE:



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MYSTERY MAN



DAVID LISS
PATRICK ZIRCHER
ANDY TROY

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MYSTERY MEN

Starring

and



DENNIS PIPER
AKA
THE OPERATIVE



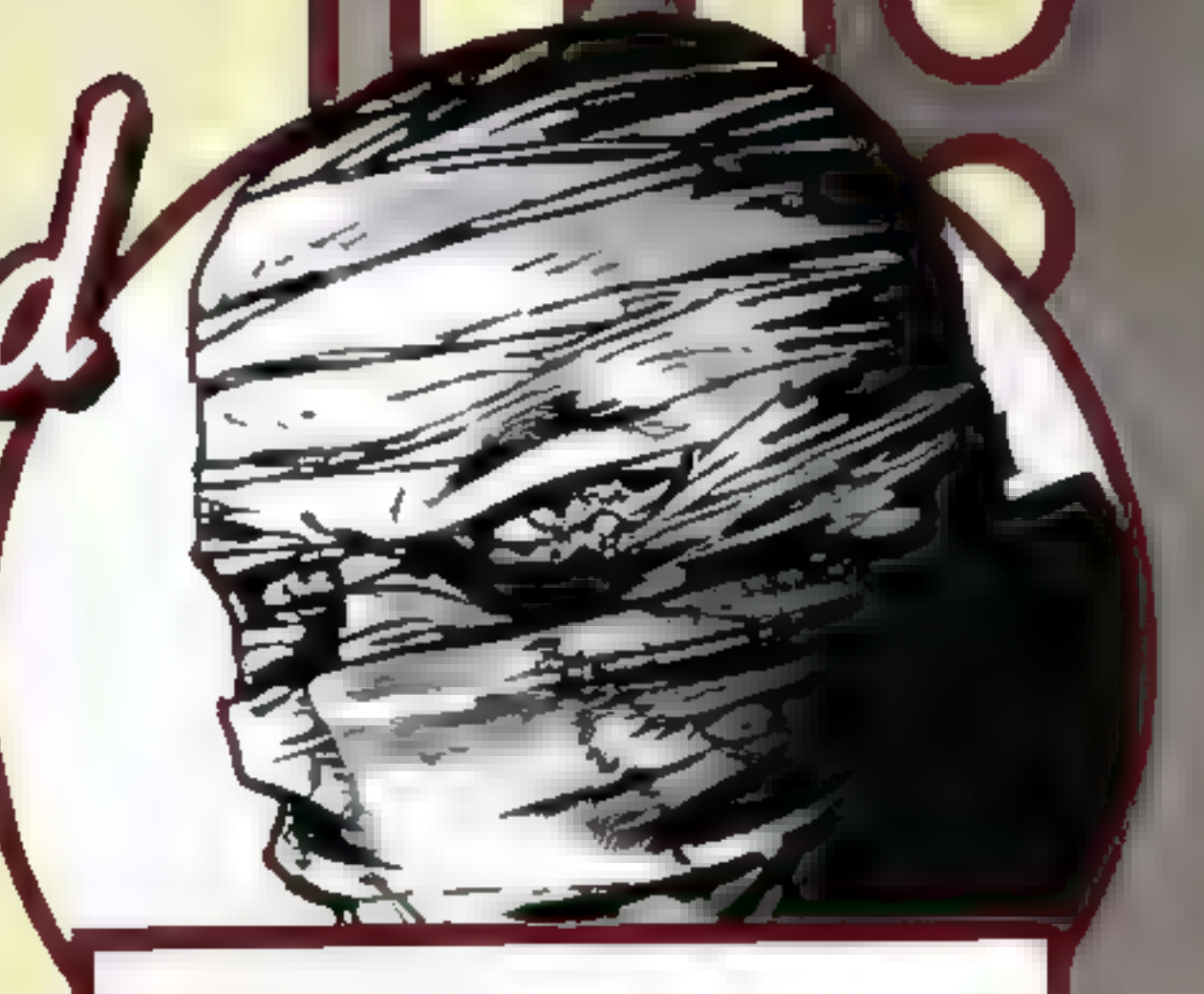
SARAH STARR
AKA
THE AVIATRIX



EZEKIEL WRIGHT
AKA
THE REVENANT



PROF. LEWIS GREEN
AKA
ACHILLES



THE SURGEON



Last time...

New York City, 1932. The Great Depression has stirred unrest through the streets of Manhattan. Benefitting from the city's sufferance is The Board, an alliance of the rich and powerful lead by a man known as The General, who made a pact to return the demonic fear lord Nox to its corporeal form. In exchange, he was promised the unimaginable power contained in an ancient amulet. Unfortunately for The General, the archeologist he sent to recover the amulet - Professor Lewis Green - took control of the power for himself.

The Professor then teamed with Dennis Piper - masquerading as the cat thief called The Operative - and his band of costumed vigilantes, which includes the high-flying Aviatrice, the mystical showman The Revenant, and the horribly disfigured Surgeon to bring justice to The General for his injustices against society.

Despite their actions, the General - revealed to be Piper's father - succeeded in transforming the demonic Nox to physical form, but the demented duo had one unthinkable step left to achieve to unleash the fear lord's full power. The team of heroes rushed to prevent the evil couple from sacrificing a group of kidnapped children, including the young son of America's pilot hero, Charles Lindbergh. The heroes arrived too late, and found the children's prison abandoned. Shattered by their emotional defeat, the outfit of vigilantes went their separate ways...but they still have one more chance to stop the horrific sacrifice.

DAVID LISS
WRITER

&

PATRICK ZIRCHER
ARTIST

ANDY TROY
COLORIST

DAVE SHARPE
LETTERER

MANNY MEDEROS
PRODUCTION

RACHEL PINNELAS & JOHN DENNING
ASSISTANT EDITORS

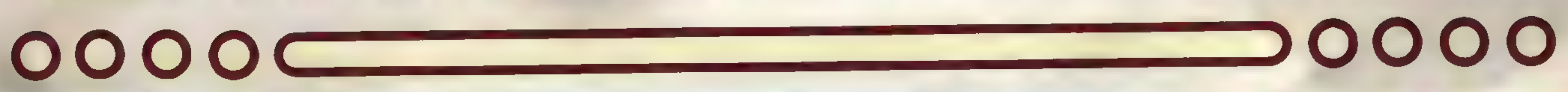
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JOE QUESADA
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PUBLISHER

ALAN FINE
EXECUTIVE PRODUCER



□ NEW YORK CITY. 1914. □

YOU'RE
RUNNING OUT
OF TIME, DENNIS.
THREE MINUTES OF
AIR REMAIN.

TWO
MINUTES
OF AIR
REMAIN.

CLICK

THERE ARE NO
WEAPONS IN THE ROOM,
AND THESE MEN WILL KILL
YOU IF GIVEN THE
CHANCE. AND
REMEMBER...

...THERE
IS NOWHERE
TO GO.



NEW YORK CITY. 1932.

My father, the General, killed the woman I *loved*. Now he's kidnapping children. We *tried* to save them.

We failed.

He killed the son of Charles Lindbergh, America's aviation hero.

He still has more children. Maybe they're alive, but we have no idea how to find him or why he wants them.

Sarah and Revenant vanished. The going got tough, and they got going...probably to some hidden love nest.

Achilles is off on his personal *crusade* to wipe out crime. Admirable in its own way, but he's given up on the children.

Every time he kills someone, he becomes *stronger*, and he's killed a *lot* of people. *Bad* people, but even so, it doesn't sit well.

It's like he can't get enough.

And the Surgeon? Who can say where that *wacko* is or what he's doing. But he's given up on the children, too.

Everyone has.



Everyone but *me*.



I KNEW YOU WEREN'T LIKE THE REST OF THEM. YOU CAN'T LET IT GO EITHER. IT'S A *SICKNESS* INSIDE YOU, ISN'T IT? EATING AT YOU?

THE ONLY CURE IS TO FIND THE CHILDREN.



BUZZ OFF, SURGEON. I'M *DONE* WORKING WITH OTHERS, AND I DON'T LIKE THE WAY YOU OPERATE...SO TO SPEAK.

THE GENERAL IS STILL OUT THERE.

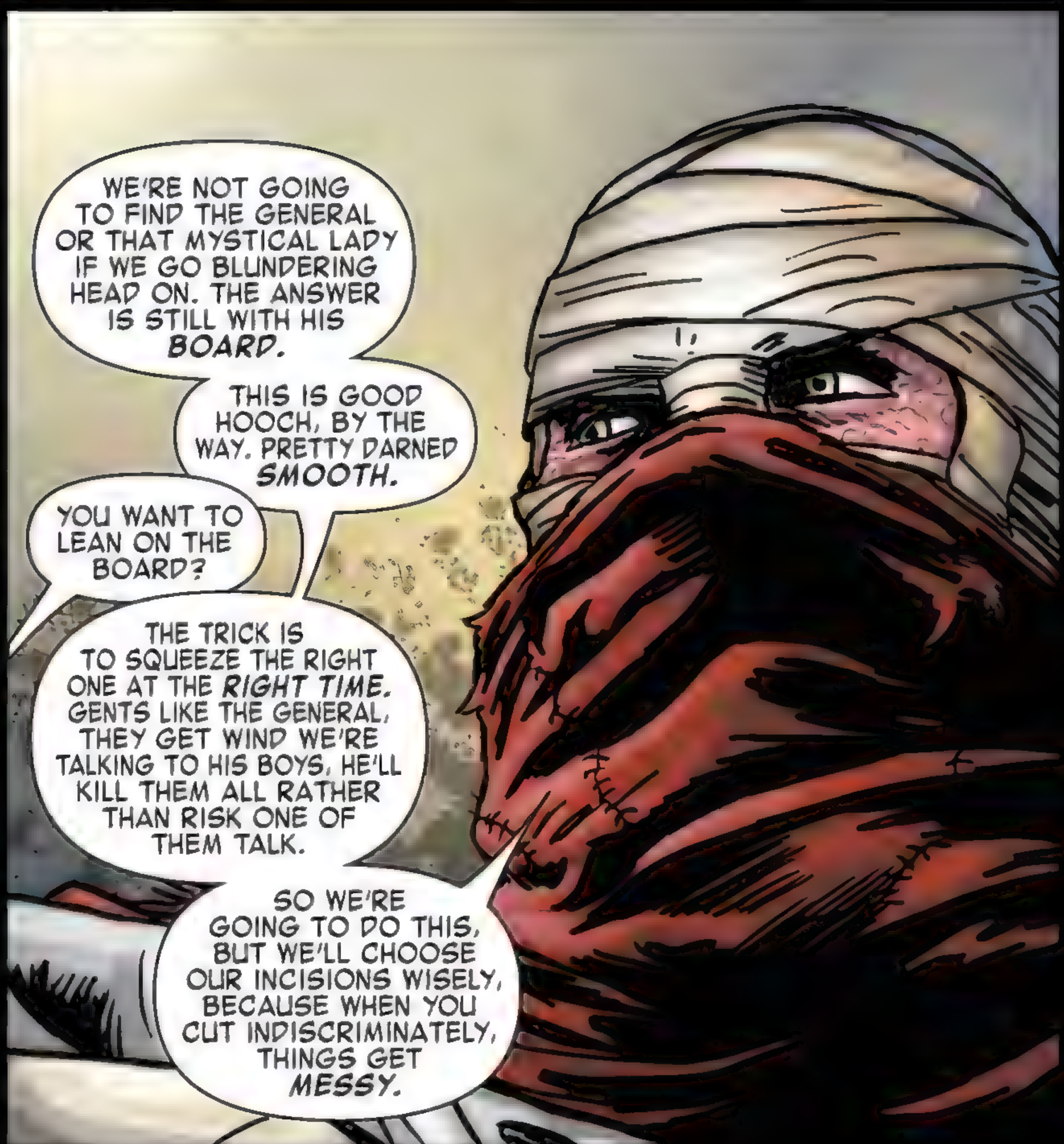


ARE YOU GOING TO LET HIM GET AWAY WITH EVERYTHING HE'S DONE?

I'LL *FIND* HIM, AND WHEN I DO, HE WON'T BE GETTING AWAY WITH *ANYTHING*. I'M JUST OUT OF IDEAS FOR NOW.

I'VE GOT PLENTY. BUT YOU MAY HAVE TO BE A LITTLE OPEN-MINDED...

...ABOUT THE WAY I OPERATE.



WE'RE NOT GOING TO FIND THE GENERAL OR THAT MYSTICAL LADY IF WE GO BLUNDERING HEAD ON. THE ANSWER IS STILL WITH HIS BOARD.

THIS IS GOOD HOOCH, BY THE WAY. PRETTY DARNED SMOOTH.

YOU WANT TO LEAN ON THE BOARD?

THE TRICK IS TO SQUEEZE THE RIGHT ONE AT THE *RIGHT TIME*. GENTS LIKE THE GENERAL, THEY GET WIND WE'RE TALKING TO HIS BOYS, HE'LL KILL THEM ALL RATHER THAN RISK ONE OF THEM TALK.

SO WE'RE GOING TO DO THIS, BUT WE'LL CHOOSE OUR INCISIONS WISELY, BECAUSE WHEN YOU CUT INDISCRIMINATELY, THINGS GET MESSY.



NOX, THIS BOARD OF YOURS, YOU SAY THEY ARE INDEPENDENT THINKERS. I HOPE YOU WILL BE ABLE TO BRING THEM AROUND TO OUR WAY OF THINKING.

HAVE NO WORRIES, BARON ZEMO. THE GENERAL SHALL MAKE THEM PUTTY IN OUR HANDS. HE KNOWS PRECISELY WHAT TO SAY. DON'T YOU, GENERAL?

I...I KNOW PRECISELY WHAT TO SAY.

YOU SEE, BARON? YOUR FRIENDS BACK IN BERLIN WILL HAVE MUCH TO GAIN FROM A MUTUAL FRIENDSHIP.

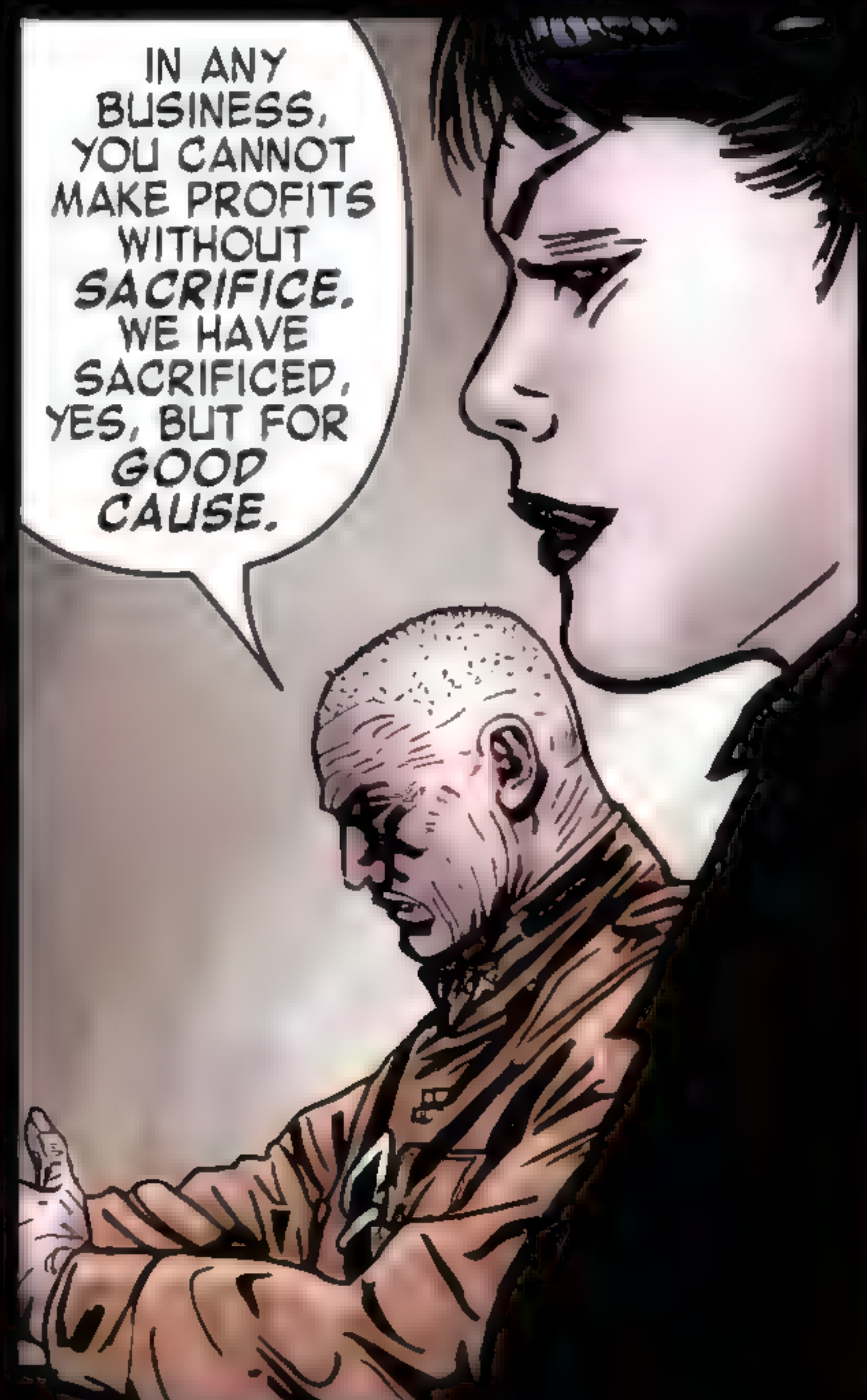


GENERAL, WE ARE NOT HAPPY. ONE OF OUR OWN IS DEAD, AND I SUSPECT YOUR WORK IS BEHIND THIS.

AND NOW WE HAVE THIS GERMAN ON OUR AMERICAN BOARD REPRESENTING SOCIALISM.

IT IS NATIONAL SOCIALISM, AND NOX HERSELF INVITED ME.

WHY DO WE CARE ANYTHING ABOUT WHAT THIS WOMAN WANTS?



IN ANY BUSINESS, YOU CANNOT MAKE PROFITS WITHOUT SACRIFICE. WE HAVE SACRIFICED, YES, BUT FOR GOOD CAUSE.



IF YOU CONTINUE TO DO WHAT I SAY, THEN I WILL BE ABLE TO PROVIDE YOU WITH NEAR LIMITLESS WEALTH AND POWER.



IF WE DO WHAT YOU SAY?! WELL THEN, SAY IT. WHAT WOULD YOU ASK US TO DO?



OH, NOTHING TOO DIRTY FOR YOUR HANDS. JUST SACRIFICE A GROUP OF CHILDREN ON THE SUMMER SOLSTICE SO NOX CAN ABSORB THEIR LIFE ENERGY.



IT WILL BE DONE
IN THIS VERY SPOT, AT
THE SYMBOLIC SOURCE
OF OUR POWER.

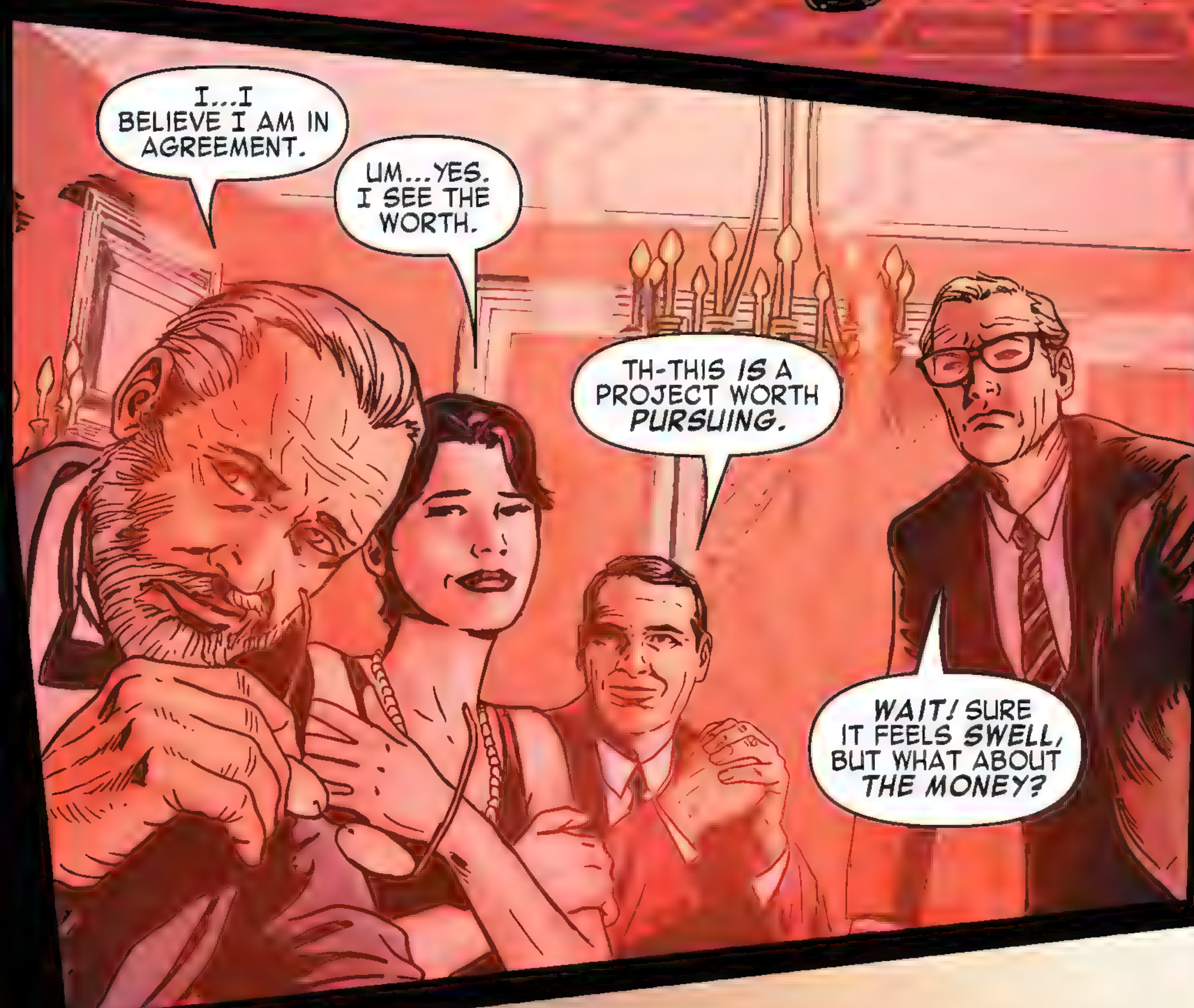
I HAVE CREATED
THIS CIRCLE, AS I HAVE
CREATED THIS BOARD, AND FOR
THE SACRIFICE TO ACHIEVE ITS
FULL POTENTIAL, YOU MUST
ALL PARTICIPATE.

YOU'RE
A LUNATIC, AND I
WILL NOT SIT HERE
AND LISTEN TO THIS
MADNESS A MOMENT
LONGER!



HGGK!

NOOO!







□ EAST AMWELL, □
NEW JERSEY.



A
DOLL?

READ THE
NOTE, OPERATIVE.
WHAT'S HE TRYING
TO TELL US?

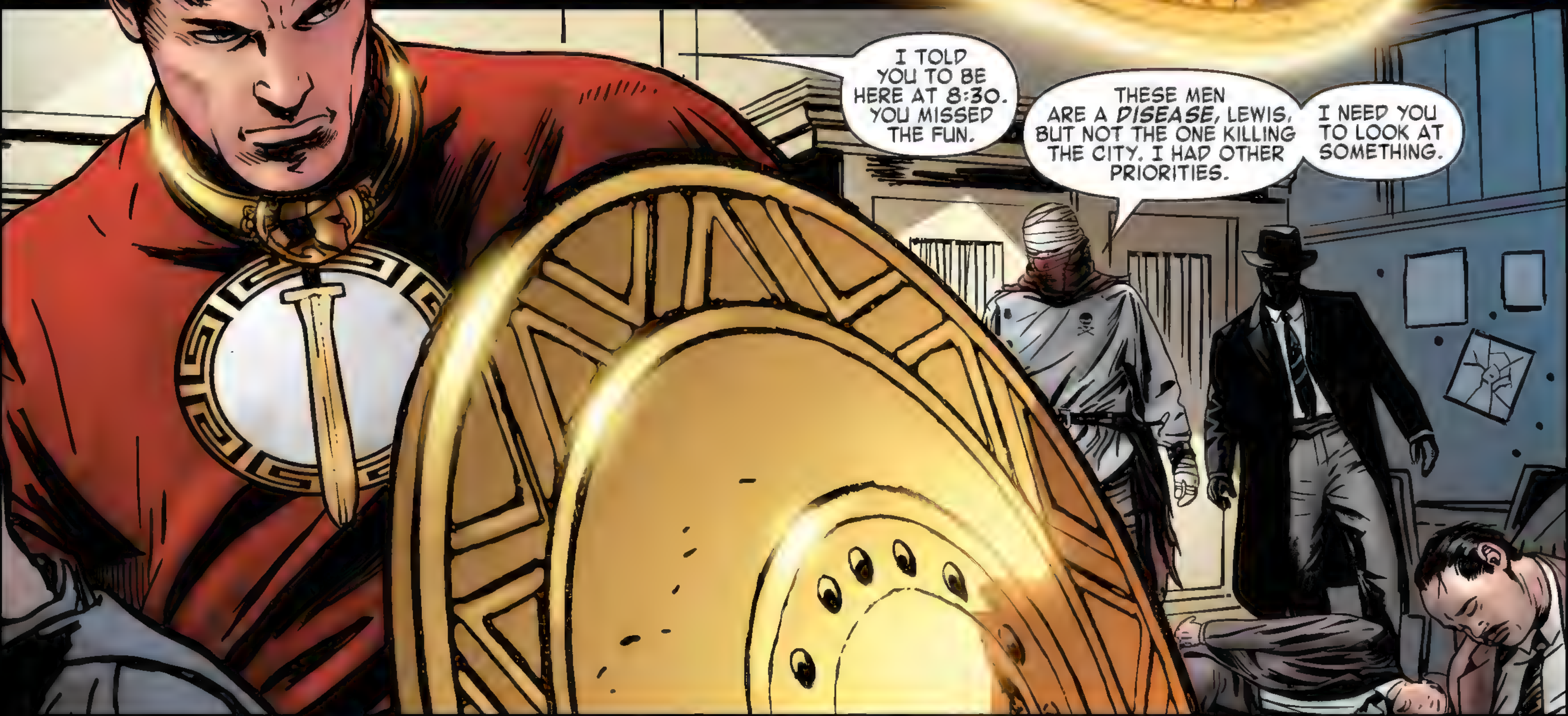


LOOKS LIKE
A LOT OF ANCIENT
GOBBLEDYGOOK
TO ME.

THEN
ISN'T IT A LUCKY
THING WE KNOW AN
ARCHEOLOGIST?



□ LITTLE
ITALY. □



I TOLD
YOU TO BE
HERE AT 8:30.
YOU MISSED
THE FUN.

THESE MEN
ARE A *DISEASE*, LEWIS,
BUT NOT THE ONE KILLING
THE CITY. I HAD OTHER
PRIORITIES.

I NEED YOU
TO LOOK AT
SOMETHING.



IT SAYS
THERE WILL BE
A *SACRIFICE* ON THE
SUMMER SOLSTICE. THAT'S
TWO DAYS FROM NOW. THE
CHILDREN WILL BE KILLED
"IN THE FIRMAMENT."
I'M NOT SURE WHAT
THAT MEANS.

I KNOW
EXACTLY
WHAT IT
MEANS.



IT MEANS
WE'RE GOING
TO NEED
SARAH.



IT'S NOT OVER, WRIGHT. WE HAVE ANOTHER CHANCE TO SAVE THOSE KIDS, AND WE'RE GOING TO NEED HER.



WE'RE GOING TO NEED YOU BOTH.



JUST LET US KNOW WHEN AND WHERE.



THE NIGHT OF THE
SUMMER SOLSTICE.

THE CHILDREN
ARE ON BOARD AND
READY FOR TRANSPORT.
THE PERIMETER IS *SECURE*.
EVERYTHING IS PROCEEDING
ACCORDING TO PLAN.

I WANT MY
DADDY.

I KNOW, DEAR
THING. YOUR DADDY,
COLONEL LINDBERGH,
IS A *GREAT HERO*,
AND THE WHOLE WORLD
LOVES HIM, BUT HE
THINKS YOU ARE
DEAD.

I WISH I
COULD GIVE YOU
BACK TO HIM, BUT
INSTEAD I MUST KILL
YOU TO *FEED* OFF
THE POWER OF YOUR
SACRIFICE.

YOUR *BLOOD*
WILL FEED MY
HUNGER.

NOW WHO
WANTS A
SWEET?

CLICK

PIECE
OF CAKE.



CRUD.

NO ROOM TO
MANEUVER...NO
TIME TO FIGURE
OUT A PLAN...



CHOCK

CHOCK

CHOCK

CHOCK



THOSE
GUNS ARE NEW,
RIGHT?

KEEN.



CALL IT A
CRAZY HUNCH,
BUT I THINK WE'RE
IN THE RIGHT
PLACE.



LOOK...
IT'S THE
LINDBERGH
CHILD.

WHY DO I
HAVE A FEELING
THINGS ARE GOING
TO GET MORE
DIFFICULT BEFORE
THEY GET
EASIER?



BECAUSE
THEY ARE.
GENERAL, THE
COLORED MAN
OFFENDS MY
SENSIBILITIES.
SILENCE
HIM.

**BLAM BLAM
BLAM**

WHAT...



PARDON ME,
GENERAL.



LINNFFGH!



THIS SHOULD
EVEN THINGS OUT
JUST A LITTLE. OF
COURSE, IT WOULD
KILL AN ORDINARY
MAN...

BUT WITH ANY
LUCK, IT WILL KEEP
YOU FROM TURNING
INTO THAT WOLF
CREATURE.

I GUESS
WE CAN **FORGET**
ABOUT LUCK.

TIME TO
MAKE OUR OWN.
I'LL TAKE IT
FROM HERE.



HOLD, MY
FRIENDS. BEFORE
YOU DEVOUR THE
OTHERS, LET THEM
SEE ME AT LONG
LAST SLAY MY
BOY.



COOL IT, GENTS.
NO ONE DO
ANYTHING.

TIME FOR A
LONG OVERDUE
FATHER-SON
CHAT.



I GUESS
THIS IS IT, HUH?
ISN'T THAT RIGHT,
DAD?

YES, THIS IS
IT. THIS IS THE
MOMENT I HAVE
LIVED FOR.

THAT'S A
LITTLE SAD. WHAT
KIND OF MAN LIVES
TO BE TURNED INTO
A DOG?



EVEN IF YOU WERE ARMED, YOU WOULD HAVE NO CHANCE. YOU MUST KNOW THAT.

AND YOU CANNOT THINK YOU CAN ESCAPE. DON'T YOU REMEMBER? THERE IS NOWHERE TO GO.

I DON'T NEED TO ESCAPE. I'VE BEEN TRAINED... REMEMBER?

MY WHOLE LIFE...

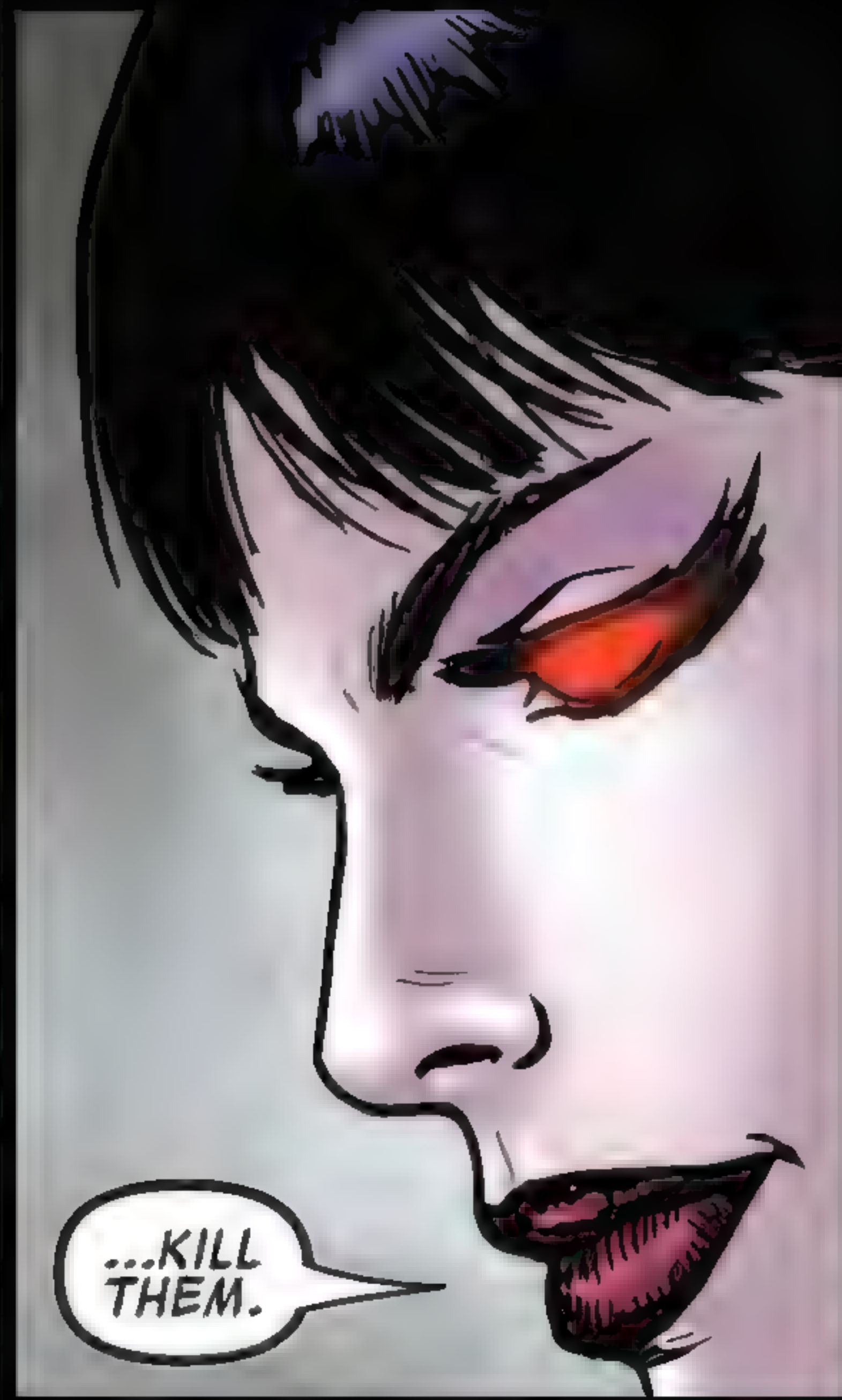
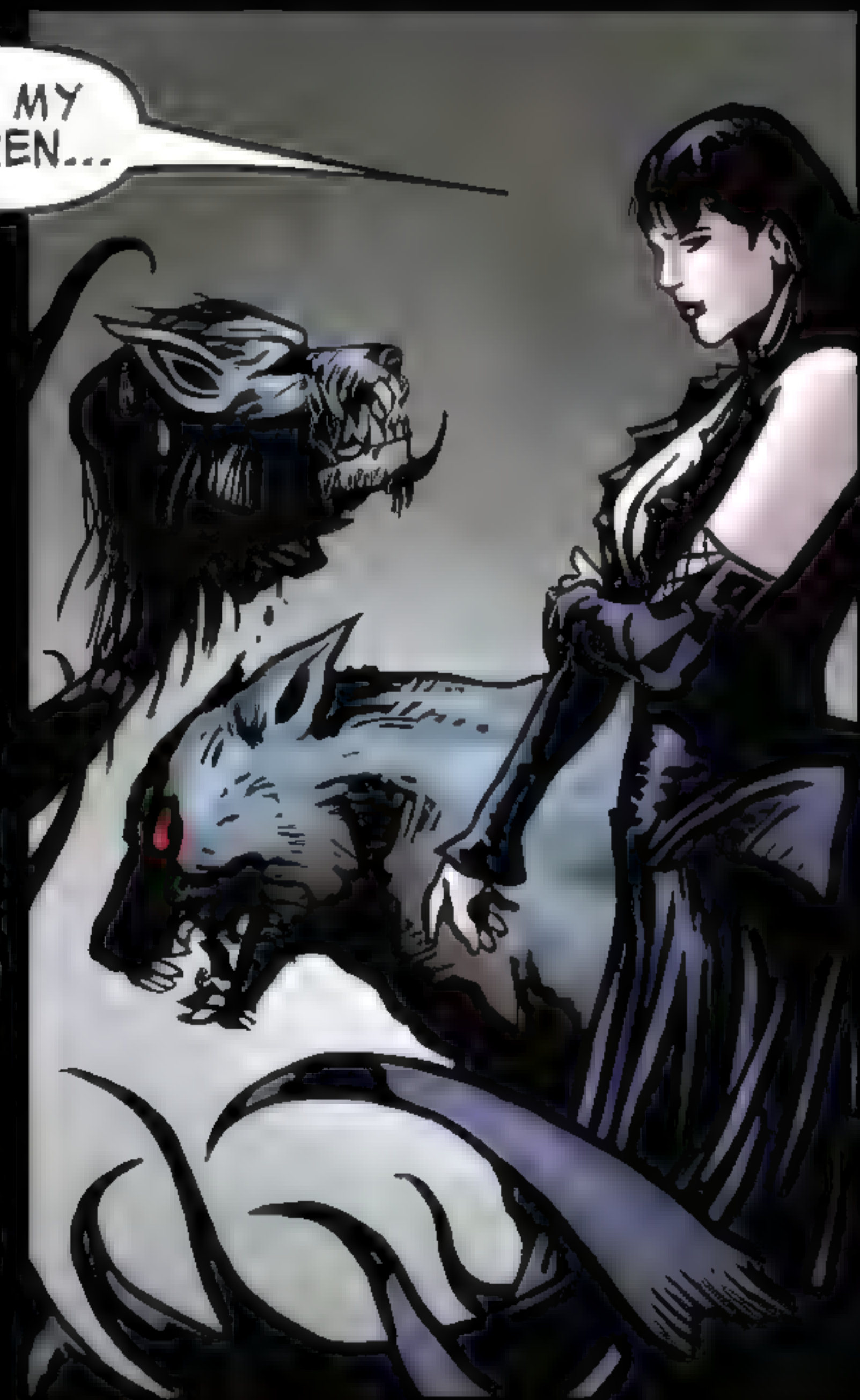
...I'VE TRAINED...

...FOR THIS!



WELL, LOOKING ON THE *SUNNY* SIDE, HE'D OUTLIVED HIS USEFULNESS.

NOW, MY CHILDREN...



...KILL THEM.



SORRY TO HEAR ABOUT THE PASSING OF YOUR FATHER.

I'LL LET YOU KNOW WHERE TO SEND FLOWERS.

I SUPPOSE THIS IS WHAT THEY CALL GALLOWS HUMOR.

YOU THREE ARE GOING TO HAVE TO HOLD OFF THESE MONSTERS. I'M THE ONLY ONE WHO CAN TAKE ON THE WOMAN.



DO WHAT IS REQUIRED. I HAVE A PLAN.

YEAH? I'M HOPING YOU'LL CLUE US IN ON IT.



YOU ARE BUT
A MORTAL MAN.
NO ARTIFACT, NO
MATTER HOW STRONG,
CAN GIVE YOU
THE POWER TO
DEFEAT ME.

LOOK
AT YOU. LIKE
A VAMPIRE,
FEEDING OFF
DEATH.

YOU'VE BEEN
ABSORBING LIVES
FOR WEEKS. I CAN
SMELL IT ON YOU.
YOU HUNGER FOR
POWER.

YOU AND I *BELONG* TOGETHER,
LEWIS. YOU HAVEN'T ACCEPTED
IT YET, BUT THE GENERAL
BROUGHT US TOGETHER
BECAUSE THAT IS OUR
DESTINY.

YOU CANNOT
BE MY VANQUISHER,
SO YOU MUST BE
MY LOVER.

YOU AND THE GENERAL TOOK
EVERYTHING FROM ME. SO
I'VE BEEN FILLING THE VOID
BY SOAKING UP LIFE FORCE.
BUT NOT BECAUSE I
CRAVE IT.

YOU'RE
GOOD AT
STEALING
LIFE...

...NOW LET'S SEE
HOW MUCH YOU
CAN TAKE!







I DON'T THINK ANY MAN WAS MEANT TO WIELD THAT KIND OF POWER.

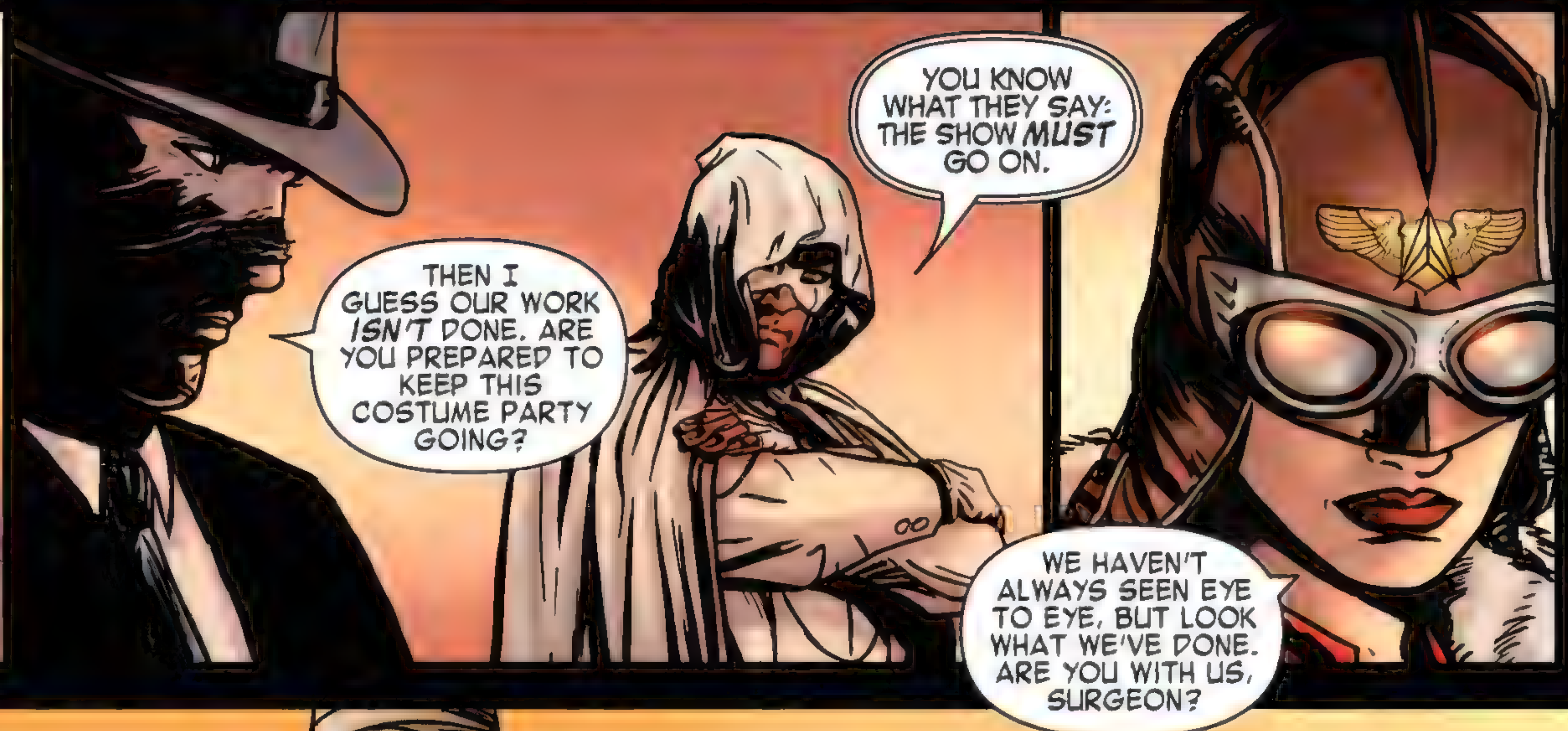


WHAT ABOUT THE LINDBERGH KID? I DON'T SEE HIM.

THIS IS ALL OF THEM. HE'S NOT HERE.



AND THAT DEVIL WOMAN IS GONE TOO.



THEN I GUESS OUR WORK ISN'T DONE. ARE YOU PREPARED TO KEEP THIS COSTUME PARTY GOING?

YOU KNOW WHAT THEY SAY: THE SHOW MUST GO ON.

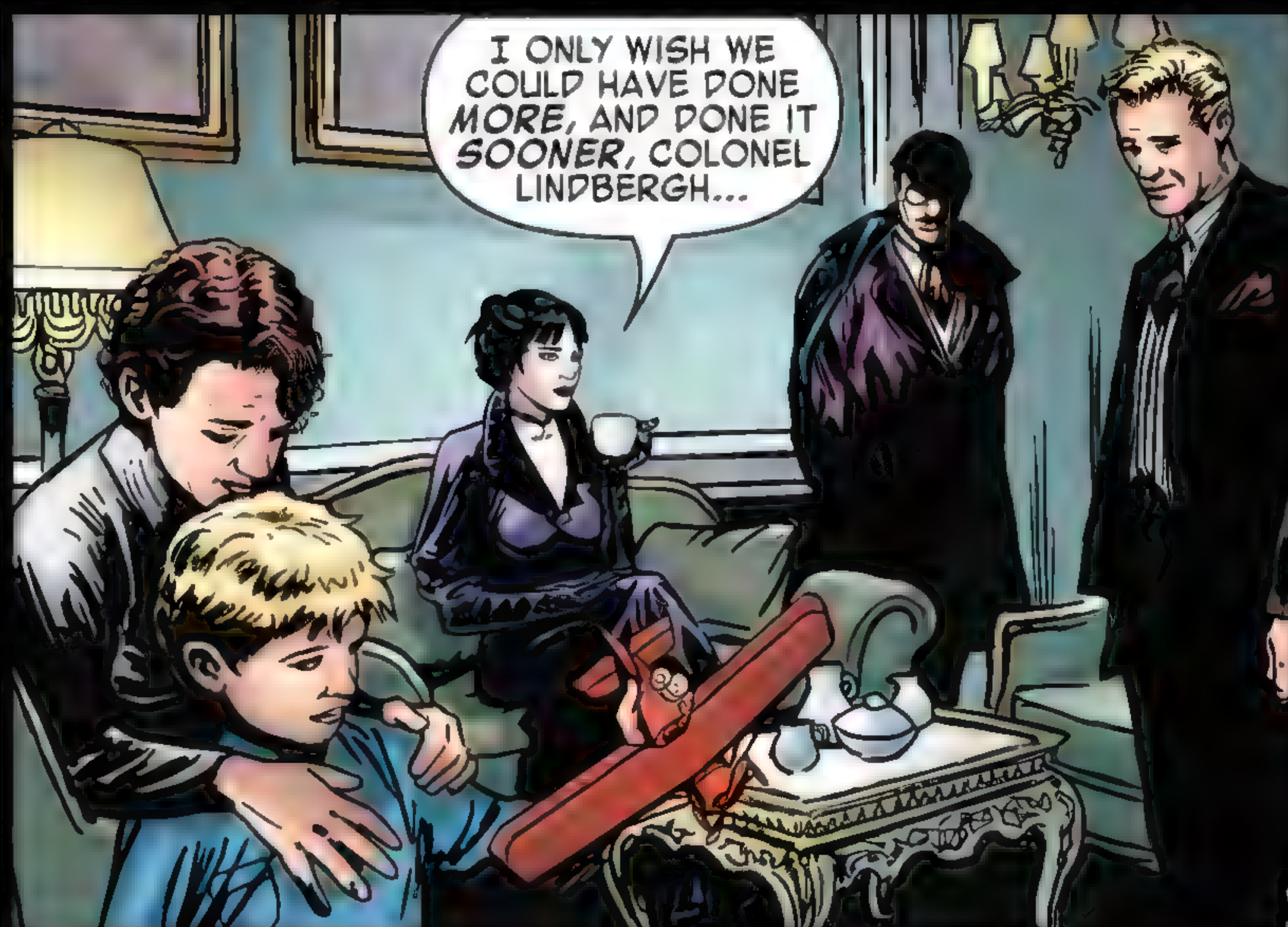
WE HAVEN'T ALWAYS SEEN EYE TO EYE, BUT LOOK WHAT WE'VE DONE. ARE YOU WITH US, SURGEON?



AS FAR AS I'M CONCERNED, WE ARE ONLY GETTING STARTED.



□ THE NEXT DAY. □



□ THE END? □

The
OP

DATE	INVESTIGATOR	CASE FILE
SEPTEMBER 14	LISS/ZIRCHER/ROSEMANN	MM 005

All creative projects end up different than they were originally conceived, and that's far more true of collaborative efforts like comic books than solo efforts like novels. When I started working on *Mystery Men*, it was my first multi-issue project for Marvel, and while I had a good sense of where I wanted it to go, the final product was far more realized and vivid and exciting to work on than I could have imagined. Thanks to invaluable and insightful editorial guidance from Bill Rosemann and Tom Brevoort, Dave Sharpe's period-perfect lettering, Andy Troy's dynamic and evocative coloring and, of course, Patrick Zircher's brilliant art, *Mystery Men* became a living, breathing creation that I'm intensely proud to have been part of.

It is always exciting to create something new, but I think there is a special pleasure that comes from creating something new in a world already well-established. Working our characters into the murky pre-WWII years of Marvel's history gave us a chance both to give context to a future and explain a past. I know I especially loved the opportunity to inject modern Marvel sensibilities into older pulp archetypes. Here's to the opportunity to return to the scene of the crime.

David Liss

What can I say about working on this project... working with David, Bill, and Andy? They're all consummate professionals, talented individuals, and a pleasure to work with. Pulp stories have always held a huge attraction for me -- from catching black-and-white Flash Gordon serials on Saturday mornings to discovering James Bama's cover art on Doc Savage paperbacks to watching the great, classic noir movies. Making these stories -- well-- this is about *Mystery Men*, so I'll put it out there like an old song from the era: "Heaven, I was in heaven and my heart beat so that I could hardly speak."

Patrick Zircher

While every project holds its own unique surprises and memories, *Mystery Men* was a true dream. A special thanks to Joe Quesada and Dan Buckley for their faith, and to Tom Brevoort, who provided key insights and a steady hand throughout the entire process. Most of all thanks to David, Patrick, Andy and Dave for creating magic... and to all of you for joining us on this dark and wonderful ride.

Bill Rosemann

MYSTERY MEN 1932



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DARLING MYSTERY COMICS™

ISSUE No. 01

TIMELY
COMICS

INC.



LISS
ARMSTRONG
STAPLES



DARING MYSTERY COMICS

by

David Liss
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Jason Armstrong
Artist

Val Staples
Color Art

Dave Sharpe
Letterer

Clint Langley
Cover

Marcos Martin
Variant Cover



““The Phantom Reporter” By ROE and Sam Cooper
Daring Mystery Comics #3, April 1940

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Joe Quesada
Editor in Chief

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Publisher

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NEW YORK CITY.
TODAY.

Peiter's
CHARMING
COATS
Gentlemen and Boys

Old Dutch
Lady

BREAKFAST
MIGUEL'S
LUNCH AND DINNER

IT'S A REAL
HONOR TO DO THIS
INTERVIEW, MR. JONES.
I MEAN... THE PHANTOM
REPORTER! A TRUE HERO
FROM THE PAST, HERE
TODAY. NOT TO MENTION
ONE WHO WAS A
JOURNALIST... I MEAN,
WHO STILL IS
ONE.

HEY, MR.
JONES, UM, DID
YOU HEAR ME?
YOU LOOK, UM...
DISTRACTED.

ARE YOU
OKAY?

SORRY. I HEARD YOU, SAM.
JUST THINKING ABOUT... WELL,
AS YOU MENTIONED...
THE PAST.

SOMETIMES
IT SUCKS
YOU IN.

SOME OF THE OTHER MYSTERY
MEN WHO WERE FROZEN BACK
IN WWII HAVE HAD A HARD TIME
SINCE BEING REVIVED--THEY
CAN'T TAKE IT. CAN'T ACCEPT
THE CHANGE.

AND IT'S
HARD. NO
DOUBT ABOUT
IT. BUT, WHEN
YOU THINK ABOUT
IT, IT'S ALSO
A GIFT.

I MEAN...
HOW MANY MEN
GET TO SEE THE
FUTURE?

CHRIST, ALL
THE GUYS IN THAT
WAR WHO DIDN'T
SURVIVE. BUT ME... I
NOT ONLY MADE IT
BUT WOKE UP
IN A WORLD OF
WONDERS.

AND THESE
HEROES TODAY? THEY
HAVE CLAWS COMING
OUT OF THEIR HANDS OR
SHOOT LIGHTNING OUT
OF THEIR EYES.
NOT ME.

YOU KNOW
WHAT I'VE
ALWAYS
HAD?



NEW YORK CITY.
1939.

LUCK.
I HAD
LUCK.

THINK OF EVERY "EARNEST
BUT TROUBLED ROOKIE
REPORTER FRESH OUT
OF SCHOOL" CLICHE
YOU CAN. IT'S ALMOST
EMBARRASSING, BUT MY
LIFE WAS EXACTLY
THE OPPOSITE.

LIKE THE
GRUFF EDITOR
WHO WON'T GIVE
YOU A BREAK...

TELL YOU WHAT,
KID. YOU KEEP HITTING
YOUR DEADLINES AND
I'LL TAKE A LOOK AT
ANYTHING ELSE YOU
WRITE UP.

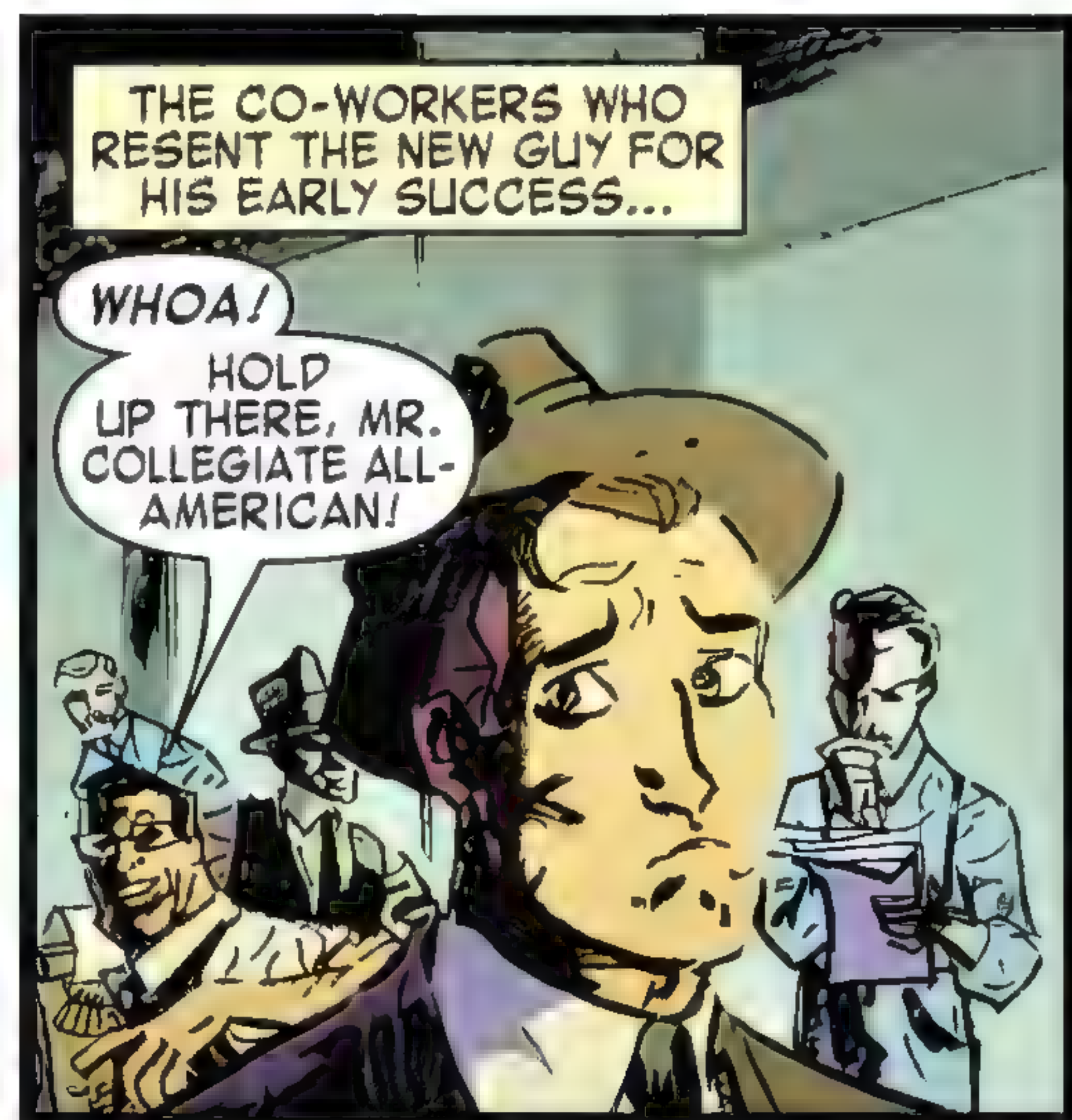
A FELLA
WHO WANTS TO
DO EXTRA WORK FOR
FREE? NOW THAT'S
WHAT I LIKE!



THE RICH PARENTS WHO
DON'T UNDERSTAND...

IT'S NOT
WHAT WE WOULD
HAVE CHOSEN FOR
YOU, RICHARD, BUT
IT ISN'T OUR PLACE
TO MAKE THOSE
DECISIONS.

I WORKED
HARD ALL MY LIFE
SO MY CHILDREN COULD
HAVE CHOICES. IF
JOURNALISM IS WHAT
YOU WANT, THEN GO BE
THE BEST DAMN
JOURNALIST YOU
CAN BE.



THE CO-WORKERS WHO
RESENT THE NEW GUY FOR
HIS EARLY SUCCESS...

WHOA!
HOLD
UP THERE, MR.
COLLEGIATE ALL-
AMERICAN!



SAW YOUR
PIECE IN TODAY'S
PAPER. THREE MONTHS
ON THE JOB AND
DIGGING UP STUFF
LIKE THAT ON
YOUR OWN!

SOMEDAY
I'LL SAY I
KNEW YOU
WHEN!



IT WASN'T ALL BIG
HEADLINES. NOT BY A
LONG SHOT.

OBITUARIES, MUNICIPAL
MEETINGS, THE BORING
JOBS NO ONE WANTS.
I PAID MY DUES.

BUT I KNEW THERE WERE REAL
BAD GUYS OUT THERE, AND I
WANTED TO GET THEM.

TED ROGERS
CITY COUNCIL
COMMISSIONER



AND SOMETIMES THE
BAD GUYS AND THE
RICH GUYS ARE THE
SAME PEOPLE--PEOPLE
I KNEW MY WHOLE LIFE.

TODAY YOU HEAR
THIS PHRASE:
"SUNSHINE IS THE BEST
DISINFECTANT."

YOU EXPOSE
CRIMINALS
BECAUSE THEY
CAN'T SURVIVE
THE SCRUTINY.
THE TRUTH
DESTROYS
THEM.

IT'S WHAT I BELIEVED.
IT'S WHY I WANTED TO
BE A REPORTER.

YOU SEE, THE MASKED
HEROES WERE JUST
STARTING TO POP UP
IN THOSE DAYS.

SOME WITH STRENGTH
OR MYSTICAL POWERS
OR JUST PLAIN OLD *GUTS*.
WHATEVER THEY HAD,
THEY WANTED TO DO
WHAT WAS *RIGHT*.

I WANTED TO DO IT WITH
THE *PRINTED WORD*. ALL
I NEEDED WAS TO FIND
THE RIGHT *STORY*.

IT TURNS OUT,
THE RIGHT STORY
FOUND ME.

EDMUND CHANCELLOR, SON OF
OSWALD CHANCELLOR, OF CHANCELLOR
PHARMACEUTICALS--ONE OF THE
DIRTIEST BUSINESSES IN AMERICA,
IF ONLY I COULD PROVE IT. I GREW
UP WITH EDMUND...

HIYA, ED.
YOU WANTED
TO SEE ME?

REMEMBER THAT CRUMB
BILLY SULLIVAN THAT WE
GREW UP WITH? LOOKS
LIKE HE AND HIS DISH OF A
WIFE **BURNED UP** IN A
HOUSE FIRE. BIG
TRAGEDY,
RIGHT?

I KNOW YOU
HAD A SOFT SPOT
FOR HIM, SO I WANTED
TO SEE YOUR FACE
WHEN YOU HEARD
THE NEWS.

YOU CALLED
ME HERE SO YOU
COULD **LAUGH** ABOUT
PEOPLE GETTING
BURNED ALIVE?

WHY NOT?
BILLY WAS YOUR
FRIEND, NOT MINE.
AT LEAST HE WAS
YOUR FRIEND...UNTIL
YOU **STABBED HIM**
IN THE BACK,
RIGHT?

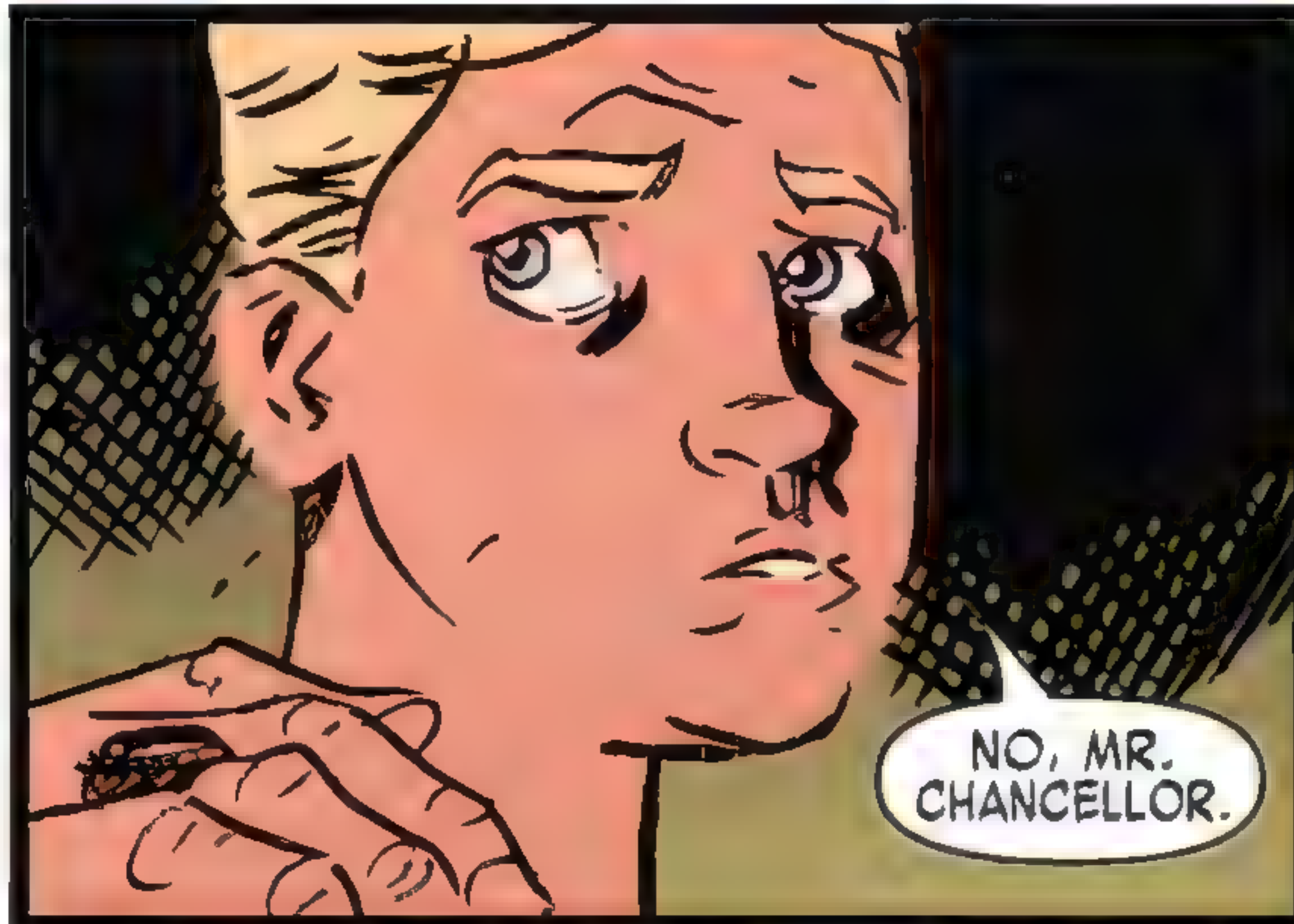
THOSE WERE
GOOD TIMES,
EH, DICKIE?

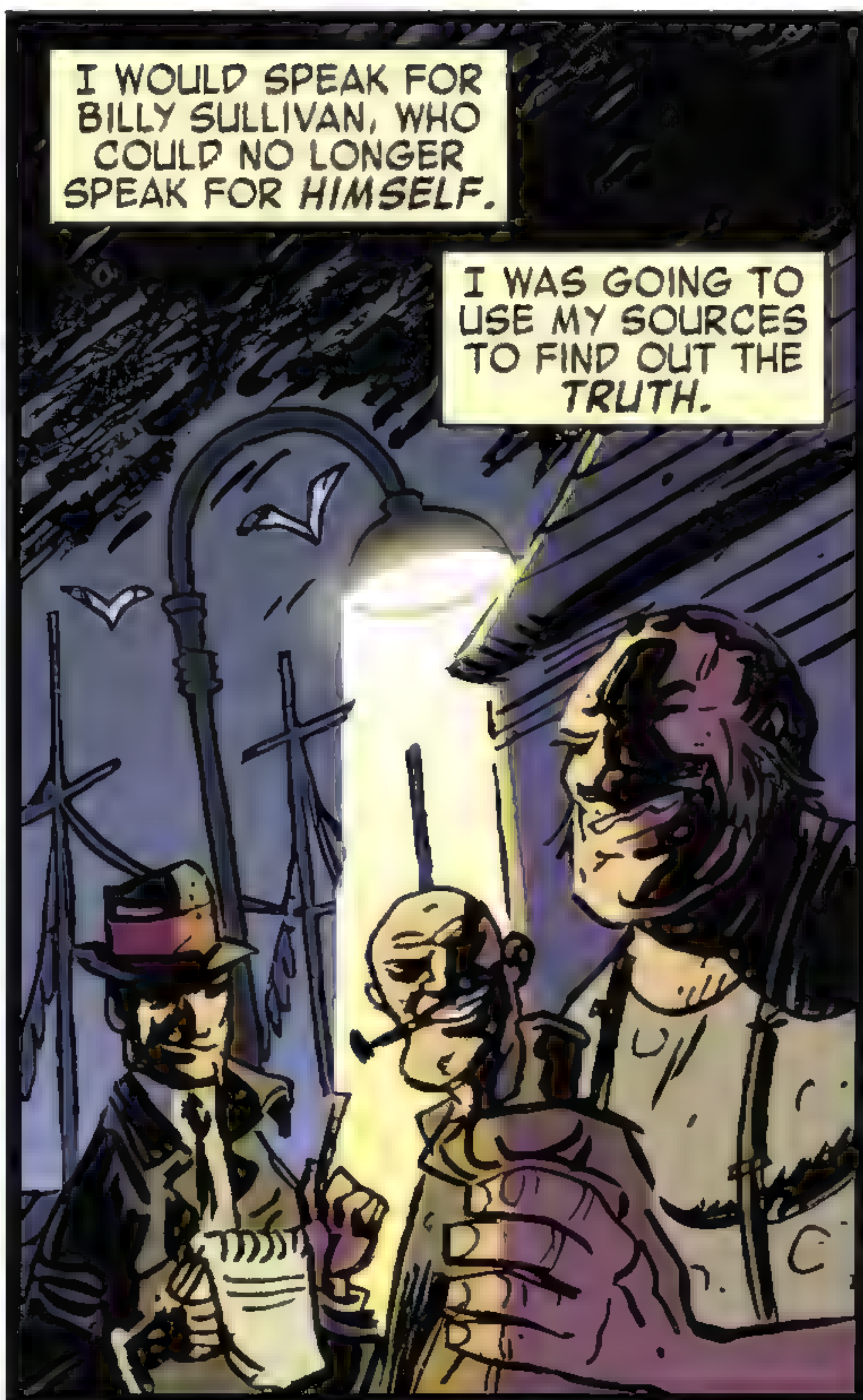
EDMUND, I THINK THAT YOUR
FRIEND MUST FEEL **OUT OF**
PLACE IN A HOME LIKE
OURS.

SURELY YOUNG
WILLIAM WOULD BE
MORE COMFORTABLE
SOMEPLACE WHERE
THERE ARE FEWER ITEMS
TO TEMPT HIM INTO
LARCENOUS
BEHAVIOR?

YEARS EARLIER.

WHEN I WAS A KID,
I HAD TO MAKE A
DECISION. I COULD
GO WITH **BILLY**, WHO
I LIKED, OR STAY
WITH **EDMUND**, WHO I
DIDN'T. BUT EDMUND
WENT TO MY SCHOOL.
OUR FAMILIES RAN
IN THE SAME CIRCLES.





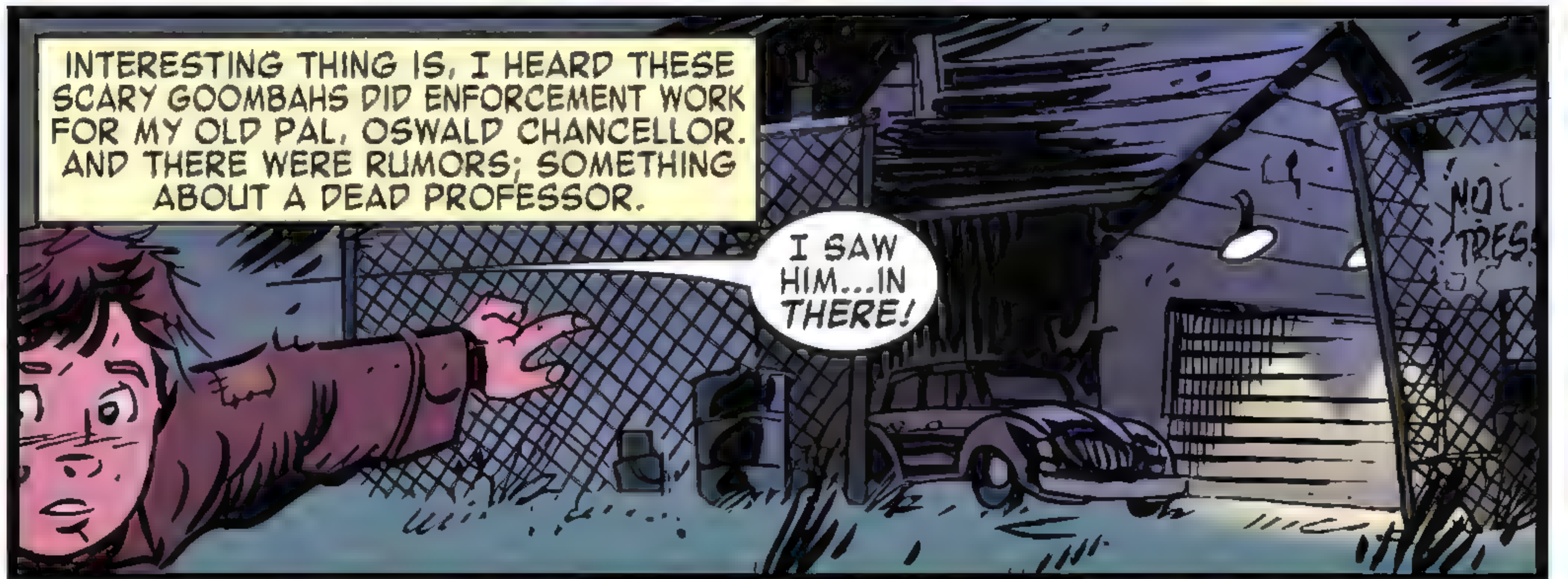
I WOULD SPEAK FOR BILLY SULLIVAN, WHO COULD NO LONGER SPEAK FOR HIMSELF.

I WAS GOING TO USE MY SOURCES TO FIND OUT THE TRUTH.



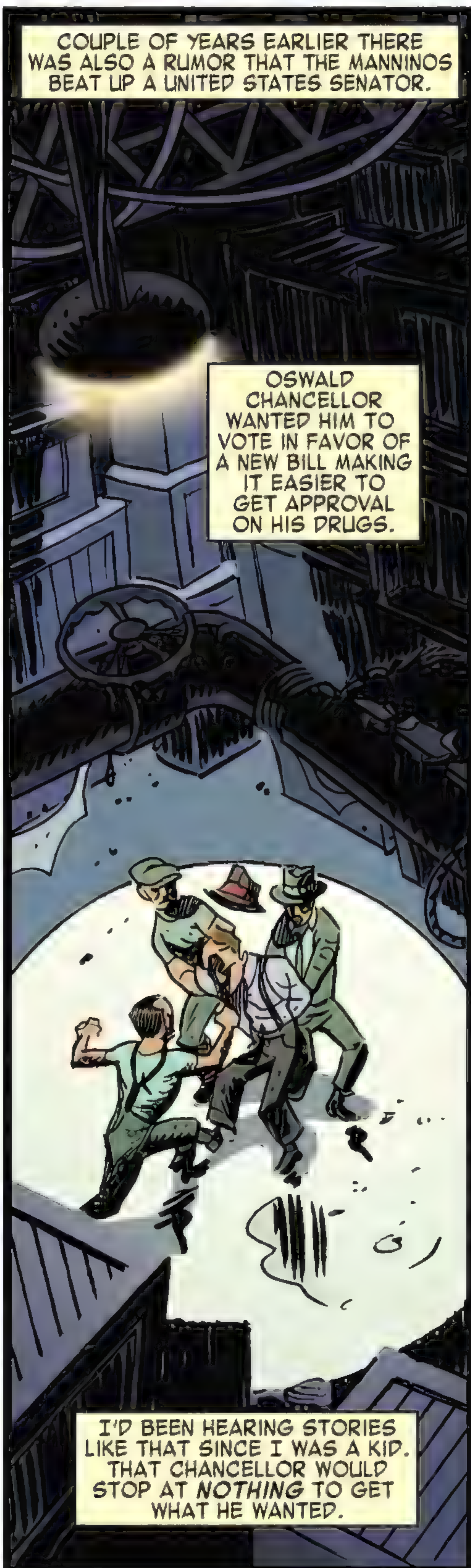
I WAS STILL OUT THERE THE NEXT MORNING, LEARNING THINGS I NEVER EXPECTED.

SUCH AS BILLY SULLIVAN, AN IRISH GUY, WAS WORKING WITH THE MANNINOS, AN ITALIAN MOB FAMILY.



INTERESTING THING IS, I HEARD THESE SCARY GOOMBAHS DID ENFORCEMENT WORK FOR MY OLD PAL, OSWALD CHANCELLOR. AND THERE WERE RUMORS; SOMETHING ABOUT A DEAD PROFESSOR.

I SAW HIM...IN THERE!



COUPLE OF YEARS EARLIER THERE WAS ALSO A RUMOR THAT THE MANNINOS BEAT UP A UNITED STATES SENATOR.

OSWALD CHANCELLOR WANTED HIM TO VOTE IN FAVOR OF A NEW BILL MAKING IT EASIER TO GET APPROVAL ON HIS DRUGS.

I'D BEEN HEARING STORIES LIKE THAT SINCE I WAS A KID. THAT CHANCELLOR WOULD STOP AT NOTHING TO GET WHAT HE WANTED.



THE GUY WAS SUPPOSED TO BE IN HIS 90S, BUT DIDN'T LOOK A DAY OVER 60.

THEY SAID WHAT HE WANTED WAS LONG LIFE, MAYBE EVEN ETERNAL LIFE.

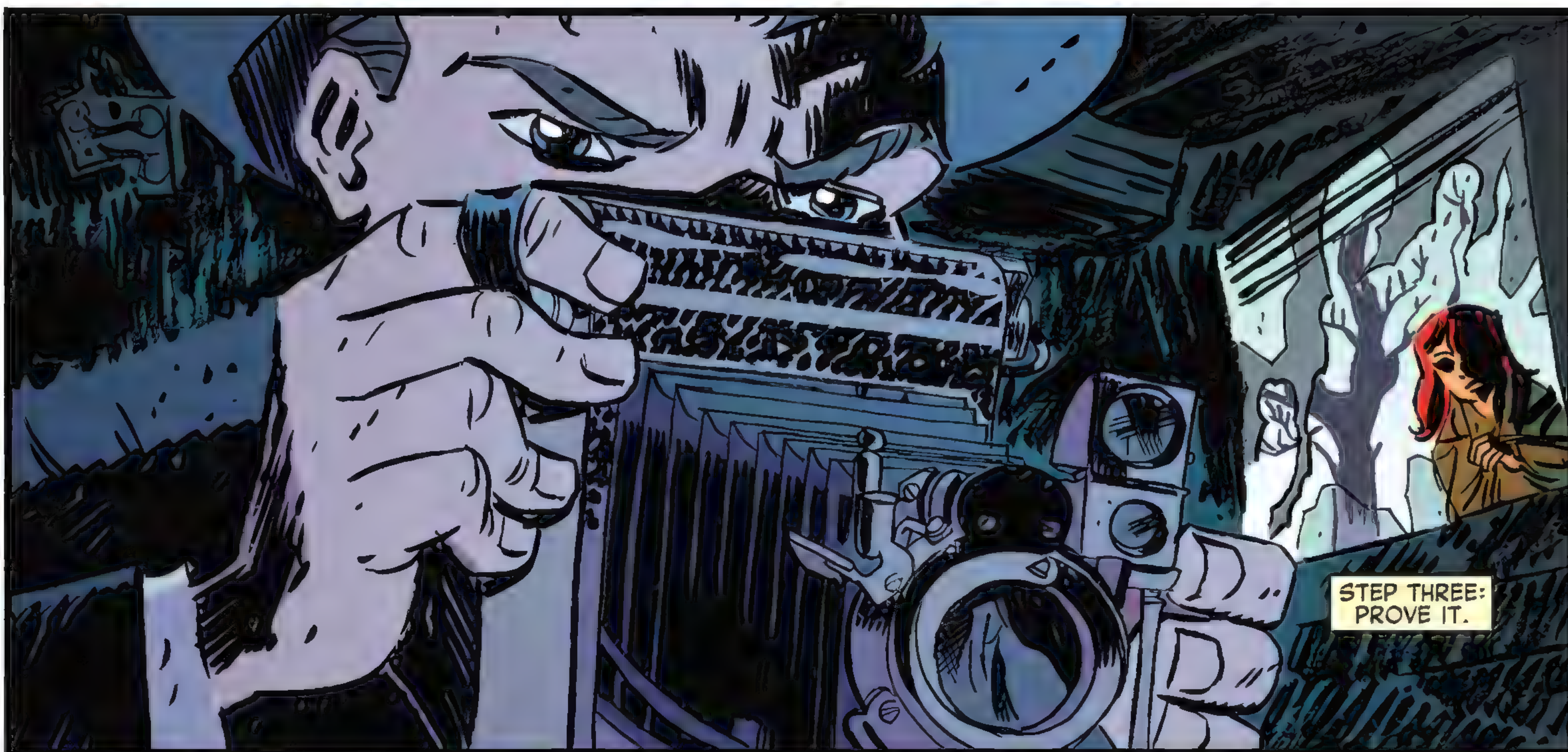
HE DIDN'T BELIEVE THE RULES APPLIED TO HIM. NORMAL HUMAN LIFESPAN--THAT WAS FOR ORDINARY JOES.

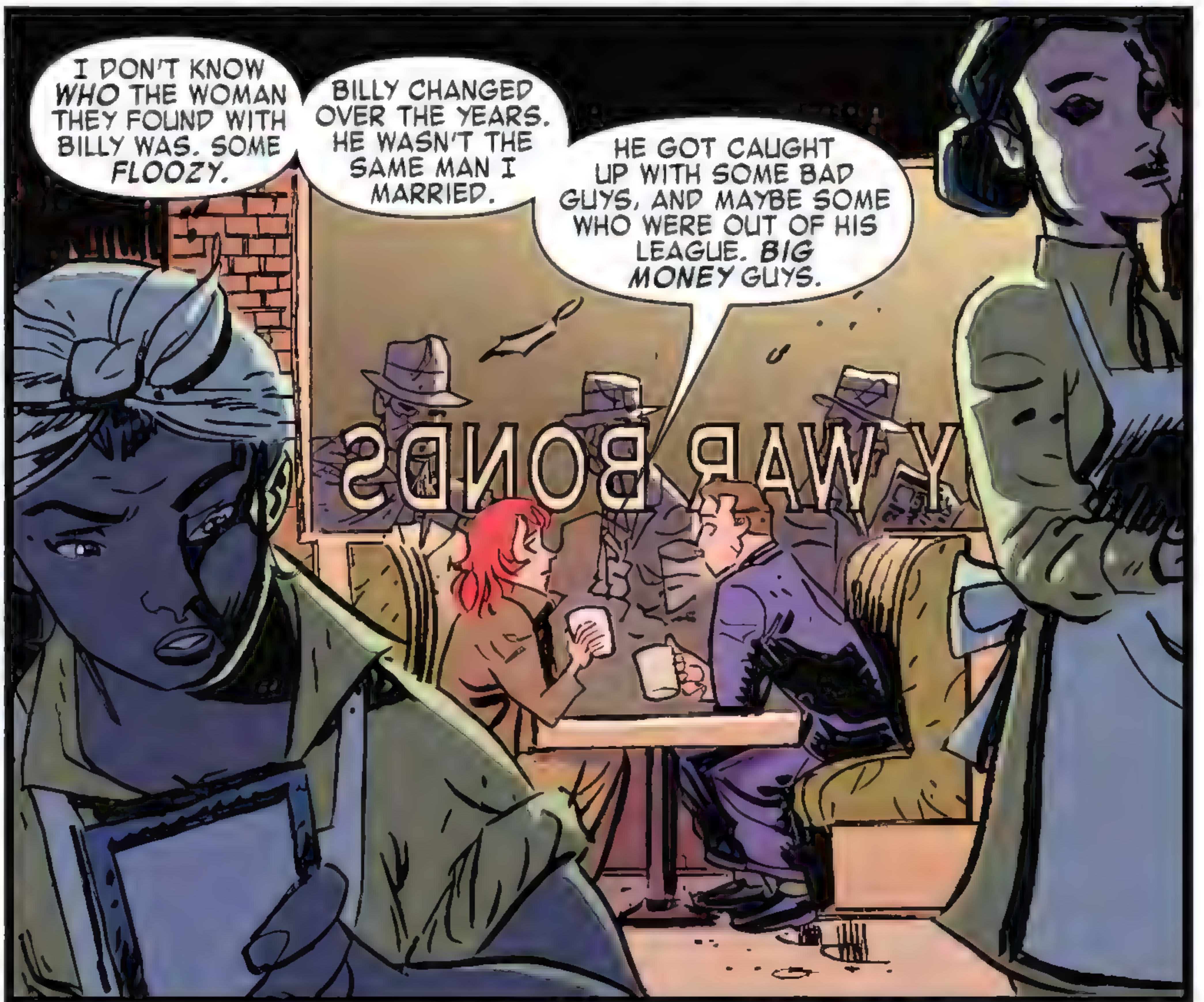
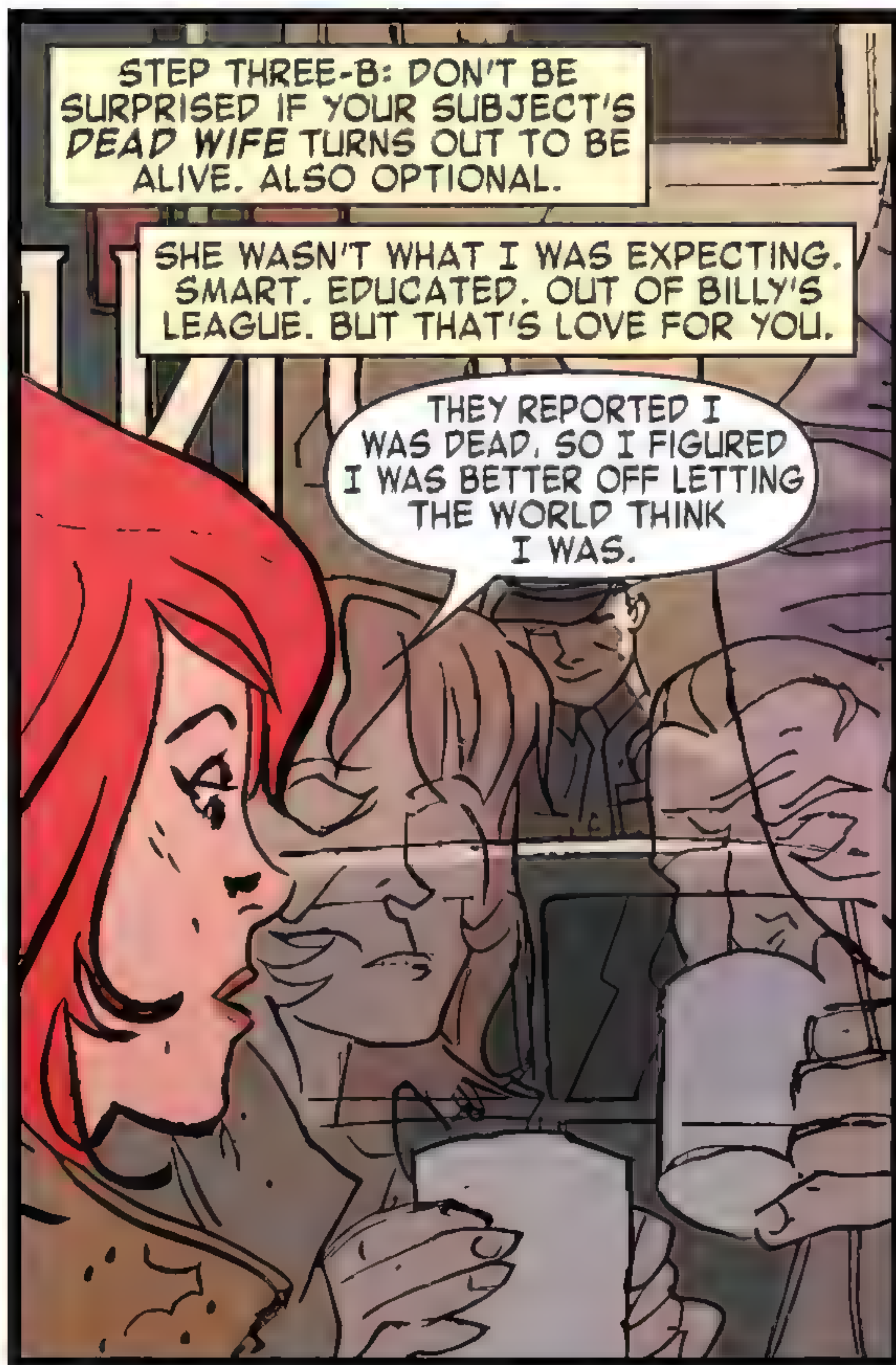
HE'D DO ANYTHING IN HIS SEARCH FOR THE SECRET. KIDNAPPING, EXTORTION. JUST STEPS ALONG THE WAY.

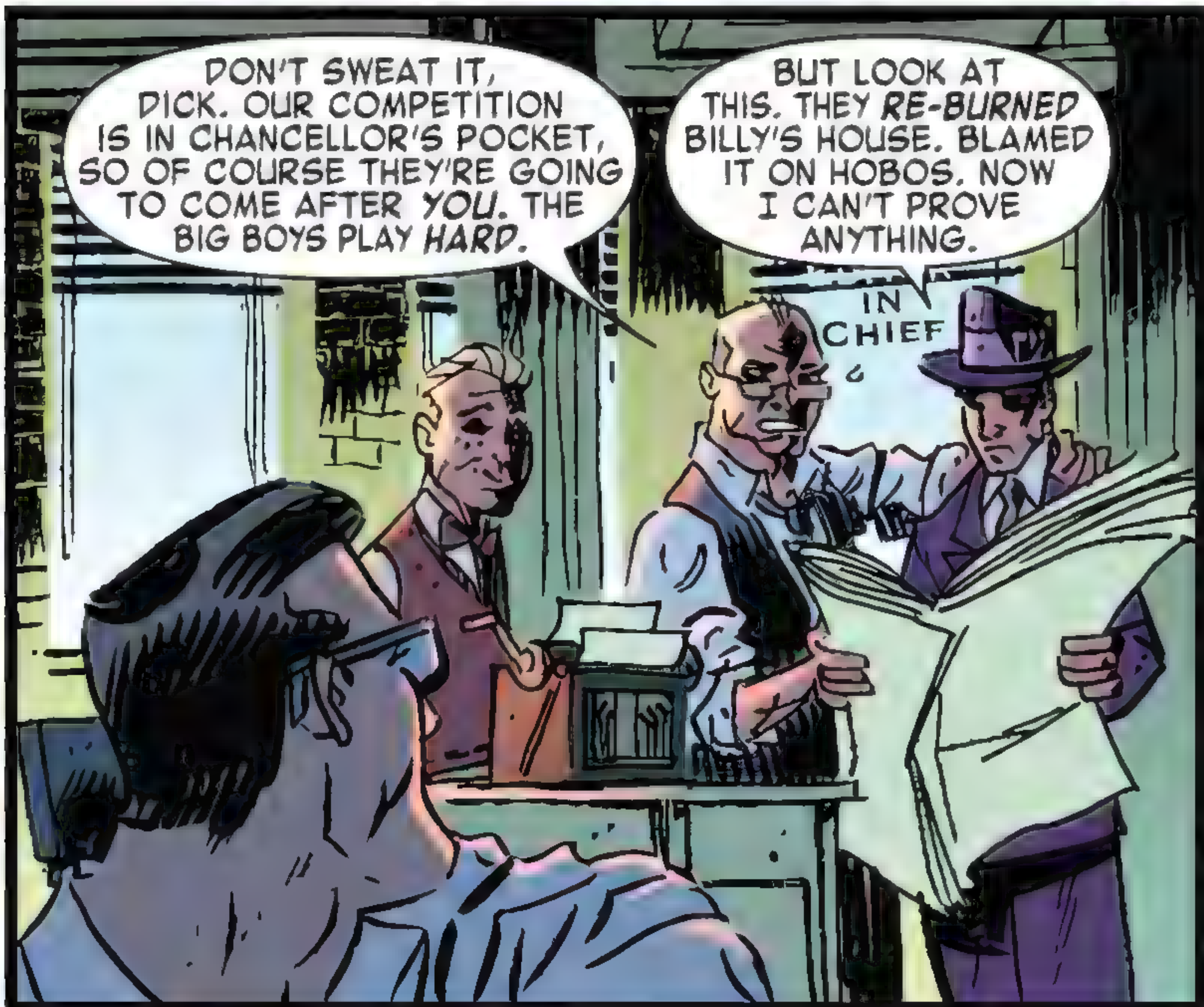
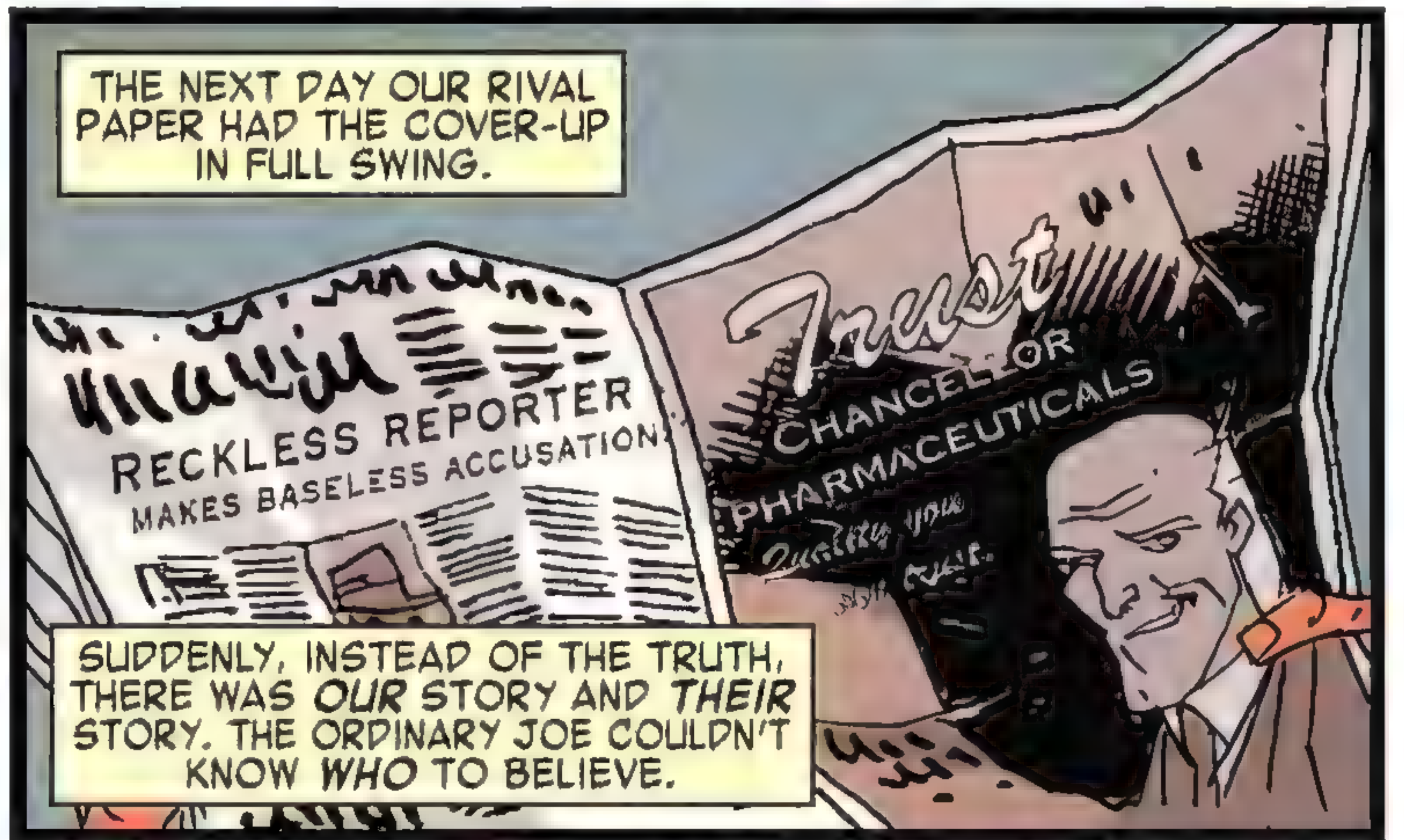


HE COVERED HIS TRACKS. TO MOST OF THE WORLD, HE WAS AN ENTREPRENEUR, CORPORATE GIANT, PATRON OF THE ARTS.

BUT IF HE WAS AN EVIL THAT FESTERED IN THE DARK, I WANTED TO DRAG HIM INTO THE LIGHT. AND MY GUT TOLD ME IT WASN'T A COINCIDENCE THAT EDMUND CHANCELLOR HAD COME TO SEE ME. MY GUT TOLD ME THE CHANCELLORS WERE INVOLVED IN BILLY'S DEATH.









CHIEF OF THE FIRE DEPARTMENT, AND CHIN DEEP WITH THE MOB. IT WAS GOOD STUFF, BUT HARD TO NAIL DOWN.



I COULD TAKE A PICTURE, EMBARRASS HIM, BUT IT WOULDN'T PROVE HE WAS COVERING THINGS UP FOR THE MANNINOS OR FOR CHANCELLOR.

BUT I KNEW WHAT WAS WHAT. AND I COULD KEEP LOOKING.



AND THE MORE I THOUGHT ABOUT MY OTHER STORY, THE MORE FRUSTRATED I GOT.

PEOPLE WERE DEAD, AND THERE'D BEEN A COVER-UP. I PROVED IT. BUT NOTHING CHANGED.

I EXPOSED THE CRIME, AND THE CRIMINALS WERE STILL OUT THERE.



THEN I GOT A CALL FROM MOLLY, BILLY SULLIVAN'S WIDOW. AND SHE SOUNDED DESPERATE.

WILL YOU MEET ME FOR A DRINK?



SHE'D CLEANED UP. I THOUGHT SHE WAS PRETTY BEFORE, BUT WOW.

IT MADE ME FEEL LIKE A REAL RAT FOR THINKING THAT WAY ABOUT A WOMAN JUST WIDOWED, BUT I COULDN'T HELP MYSELF.



MR. JONES, THERE'S SOMETHING I DIDN'T TELL YOU BEFORE. I DON'T THINK BILLY--GOD, IT HURTS TO SAY THIS--I DON'T THINK BILLY JUST KILLED THE PROFESSOR.

I THINK HE TOOK SOMETHING. SOMETHING IMPORTANT.



IF YOU CAN DISCOVER WHAT IT IS, I THINK YOU'LL FIND OUT WHO KILLED BILLY AND WHY. YOU'LL HAVE THE WHOLE STORY.



THE NEXT DAY I HEADED OFF TO THE UNIVERSITY TO INVESTIGATE THE PROFESSOR.

IT MAY HAVE JUST BEEN A COLLEGE CAMPUS, BUT I HAD THE FEELING I WAS WALKING INTO DANGEROUS TERRITORY.

HEY, MISTER... YOU'RE CUTE. COME JOIN OUR COSTUME PARTY.

YEAH, WE EVEN HAVE AN EXTRA MASK FOR YOU. IT MATCHES YOUR SUIT AND EVERYTHING.



I WASN'T ABOUT TO PUT ON A MASK, BUT IT MADE ME *THINK*.

MAYBE IT WASN'T SUCH A GOOD IDEA TO USE MY REAL NAME.



I WASN'T AFRAID TO BECOME A TARGET, BUT I HAD TO GET THAT STORY PRINTED FIRST.



THE HISTORY DEPARTMENT SECRETARY WASN'T HAPPY TO TALK, BUT SHE STILL GAVE ME THE FILE ON THE PROFESSOR.

YOU'LL SEE FOR YOURSELF. HE WROTE THREE BOOKS ON THE HISTORY OF ALCHEMY.

NOT CRACKPOT STUFF, BUT, YOU KNOW...RESEARCH ON THE PEOPLE WHO BELIEVED IN IT.

NOT THAT I READ THE BOOKS. TOO DRY FOR ME.

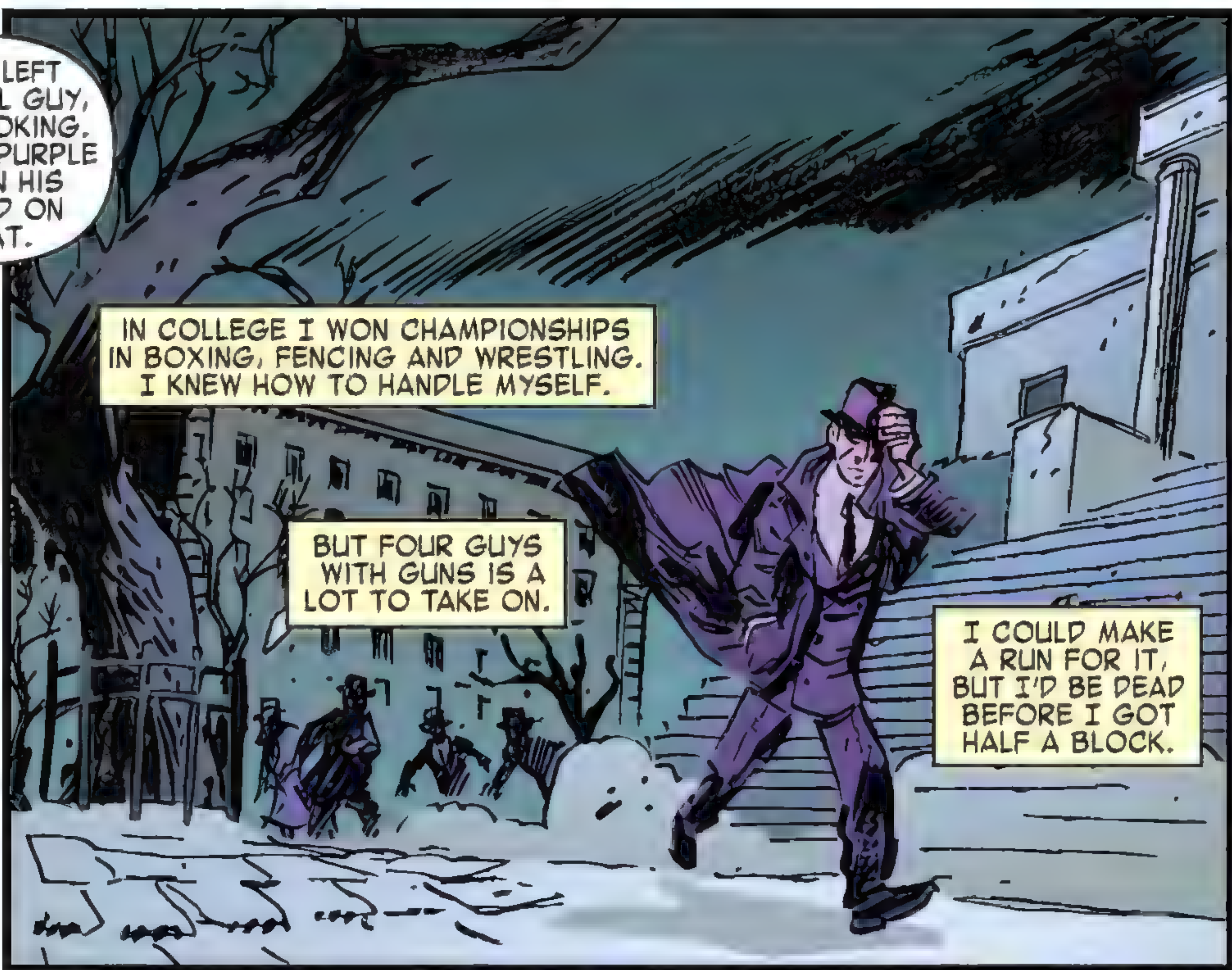


CALL IT A REPORTER'S INTUITION, BUT THERE WAS SOMETHING I DIDN'T LIKE ABOUT HER.

YOU TOLD ME TO CALL IF ANYONE CAME BY.

YEAH, WELL THERE WAS A NOSY GUY JUST IN HERE. SAID HE WAS A *REPORTER*, BUT CONVENIENTLY FORGOT TO GIVE ME HIS NAME.

HE JUST LEFT NOW--TALL GUY, GOOD LOOKING. HE'S GOT PURPLE LINING IN HIS SUIT AND ON HIS HAT.



IN COLLEGE I WON CHAMPIONSHIPS IN BOXING, FENCING AND WRESTLING. I KNEW HOW TO HANDLE MYSELF.

BUT FOUR GUYS WITH GUNS IS A LOT TO TAKE ON.

I COULD MAKE A RUN FOR IT, BUT I'D BE DEAD BEFORE I GOT HALF A BLOCK.



I NEEDED AN EDGE, AND MAYBE THE MASK THOSE PARTY GIRLS GAVE ME WAS THE ANSWER.

THOSE COSTUMED HEROES COVER THEIR FACES TO KEEP THEIR NAMES A SECRET, BUT I THOUGHT MAYBE IT WAS FOR *OTHER* REASONS TOO.

MAYBE FIGHTING A MAN IN A MASK IS DISTRACTING... *FRIGHTENING* EVEN.



MAYBE THE MASK WAS THE ONLY CHANCE I HAD TO GET OUT OF THERE ALIVE.



AND MAYBE IT
WAS MY CHANCE
TO CHANGE
THINGS--REALLY
CHANGE THEM.



ALL I WANTED WAS TO NUDGE THE ODDS A LITTLE LESS AGAINST ME.

I NEVER SET OUT TO BECOME A HERO, BUT ALREADY I KNEW I'D CROSSED AN INVISIBLE LINE.

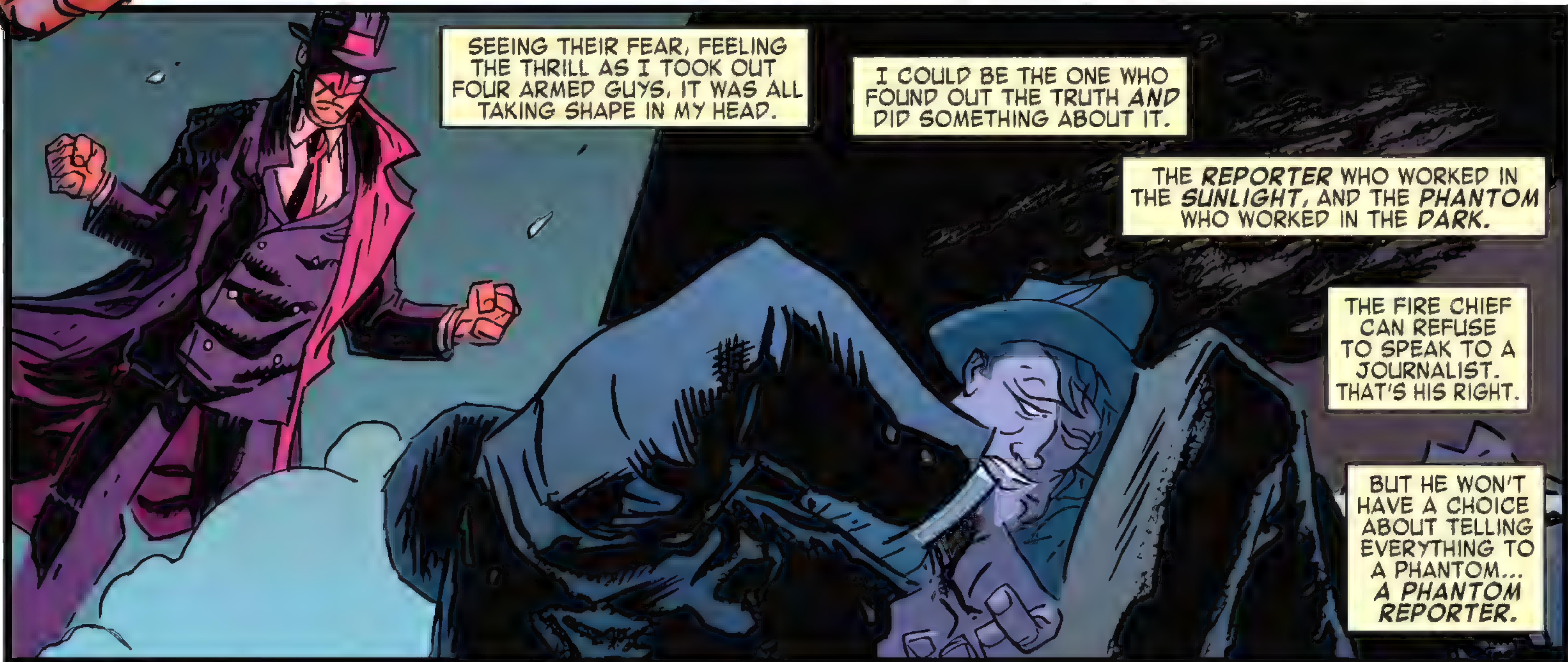
YOU CAN'T PUT THE GENIE BACK IN THE BOTTLE. I UNDERSTOOD IT NOW. I KNEW WHAT DROVE THOSE MYSTERY MEN.



A REPORTER CAN DO A LOT, BUT WAS IT ENOUGH TO JUST WRITE THE TRUTH? SHRUG MY SHOULDERS AND HOPE SOMEONE ELSE BROUGHT THE CRIMINALS TO JUSTICE?

DRILL HIM!

BUT...BUT THE BULLETS ARE JUST BOUNCING OFF!



SEEING THEIR FEAR, FEELING THE THRILL AS I TOOK OUT FOUR ARMED GUYS, IT WAS ALL TAKING SHAPE IN MY HEAD.

I COULD BE THE ONE WHO FOUND OUT THE TRUTH AND DID SOMETHING ABOUT IT.

THE REPORTER WHO WORKED IN THE SUNLIGHT, AND THE PHANTOM WHO WORKED IN THE DARK.

THE FIRE CHIEF CAN REFUSE TO SPEAK TO A JOURNALIST. THAT'S HIS RIGHT.

BUT HE WON'T HAVE A CHOICE ABOUT TELLING EVERYTHING TO A PHANTOM... A PHANTOM REPORTER.





I FOUND HIM RIGHT WHERE THE THUG TOLD ME HE'D BE, AND HE WAS FEELING PRETTY TALKATIVE.

I'M TELLIN' YA **EVERYTHING!** SULLIVAN KILLED THAT PROFESSOR, THEN I LED THE GUYS THAT BURNED OUT SULLIVAN!

I DON'T KNOW WHY! I DIDN'T ASK NO QUESTIONS!

THE ORDER CAME FROM SILVIO MANNINO HIMSELF!

WHERE CAN I FIND HIM TONIGHT?



"WHERE HE ALWAYS IS...THE HOSPITAL!"



SILVIO MANNINO, BOSS OF THE FAMILY. SECRET ALLY OF OSWALD CANCELLOR.

THE GUY WHO HAD BILLY SULLIVAN KILLED. NOW HIDING BEHIND GOONS.



HIS DAUGHTER HAD BEEN IN A COMA FOR SIX MONTHS. CAUGHT IN A BAD AUTO CRACK-UP.

SILVIO'S DEVOTION, SITTING BY HER BED NIGHT AND DAY--RUNNING HIS OPERATION FROM THE HOSPITAL--THEY'D DONE A GOOD JOB OF KEEPING THAT QUIET.

ONE OF THOSE MASKED HEROES, HUH? WHAT'S YOUR NAME? THE PURPLE PIMP?

IT DON'T MATTER. WHETHER I'M OUT ON THE STREET OR YOU CHUCK ME INTO A JAIL CELL. MY ANGELA IS STILL HERE, WASTING AWAY.

THE GAMBLING, THE HOOKERS, THE SANITATION RACKET--I'VE BEEN KEEPING IT ALL UP FOR FORM'S SAKE, BUT NONE OF IT MATTERS.

I WANT TO TALK ABOUT BILLY SULLIVAN...AND THE PROFESSOR.



GOOD FOR YOU, SMART GUY. THAT IS WHAT I'M TALKING ABOUT.

WHAT, THEY DON'T GIVE YOU NO BRAINS TO GO WITH THE MASK?

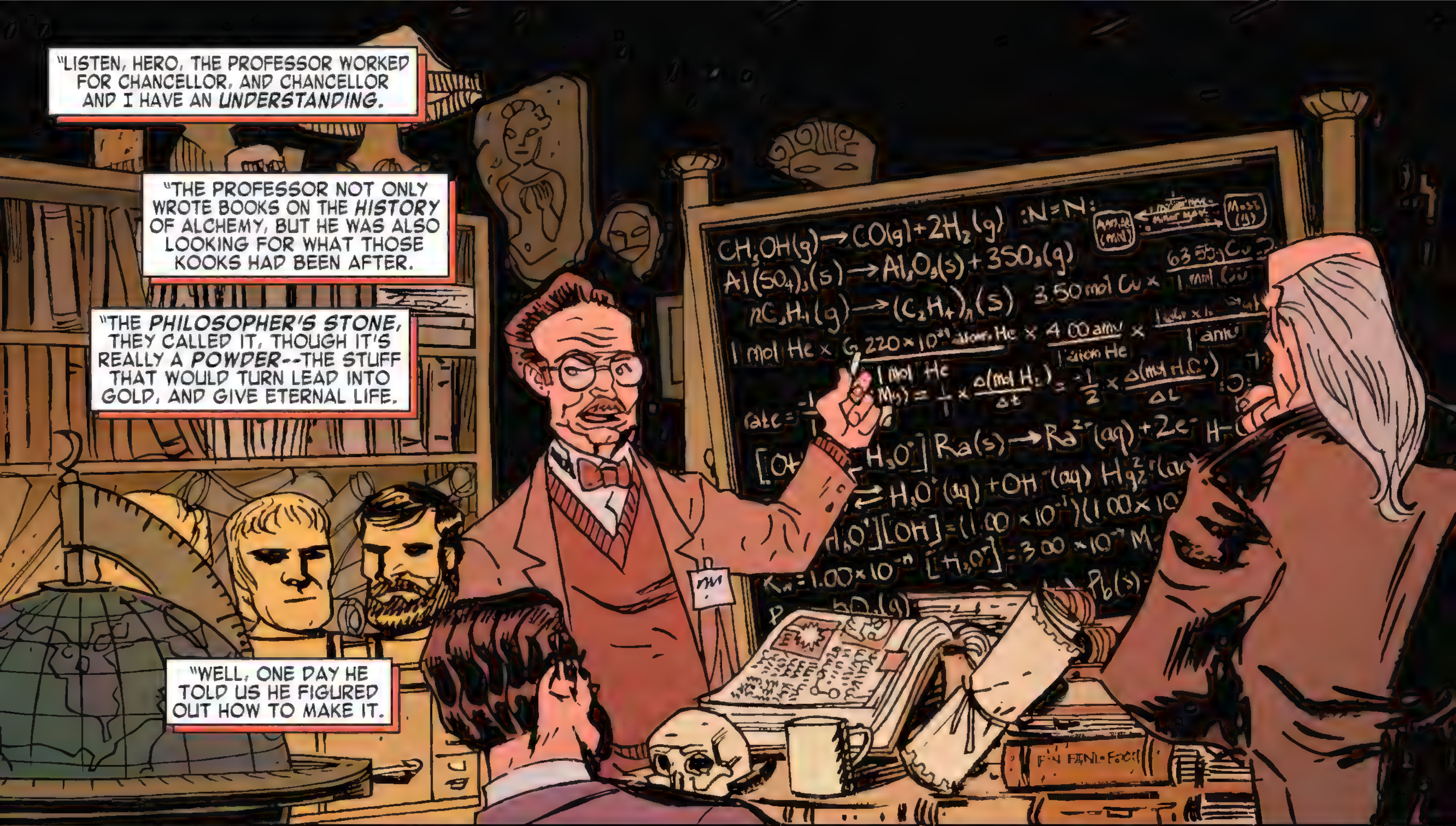


"LISTEN, HERO, THE PROFESSOR WORKED FOR CHANCELLOR, AND CHANCELLOR AND I HAVE AN UNDERSTANDING.

"THE PROFESSOR NOT ONLY WROTE BOOKS ON THE HISTORY OF ALCHEMY, BUT HE WAS ALSO LOOKING FOR WHAT THOSE KOOKS HAD BEEN AFTER.

"THE *PHILOSOPHER'S STONE*, THEY CALLED IT, THOUGH IT'S REALLY A *POWDER*--THE STUFF THAT WOULD TURN LEAD INTO GOLD, AND GIVE ETERNAL LIFE.

"WELL, ONE DAY HE TOLD US HE FIGURED OUT HOW TO MAKE IT.



"I COULDN'T MAKE HEADS OR TAILS OF IT. BUT I DIDN'T HAVE TO. CHANCELLOR SAID IT WAS THE REAL THING. HE WAS THE SMART ONE.

"I WAS THE MUSCLE. MY PART OF THE DEAL WAS *SIMPLE*. CHANCELLOR COULDN'T LET THE PROFESSOR PUBLISH HIS DISCOVERY FOR SOMEONE ELSE TO USE.

"SO I SENT SULLIVAN TO DEAL WITH THE PROFESSOR AND TAKE HIS NOTES."



"WHY SULLIVAN? WHY NOT ONE OF YOUR OWN GUYS, SILVIO?"

"HEY, IF YOU CAN'T FIGURE THAT OUT FOR YOURSELF, IT'S TIME TO GIVE UP THE GOOD GUY BUSINESS."



"YOU WANTED SOMEONE YOU WOULDN'T MIND *ELIMINATING* IF HE DISCOVERED TOO MUCH."

"*BINGO*. IT'S A GAME OF MOVES, HERO. YOU HAVE TO THINK *FIVE* STEPS AHEAD, OR YOU'RE *DEAD MEAT*."

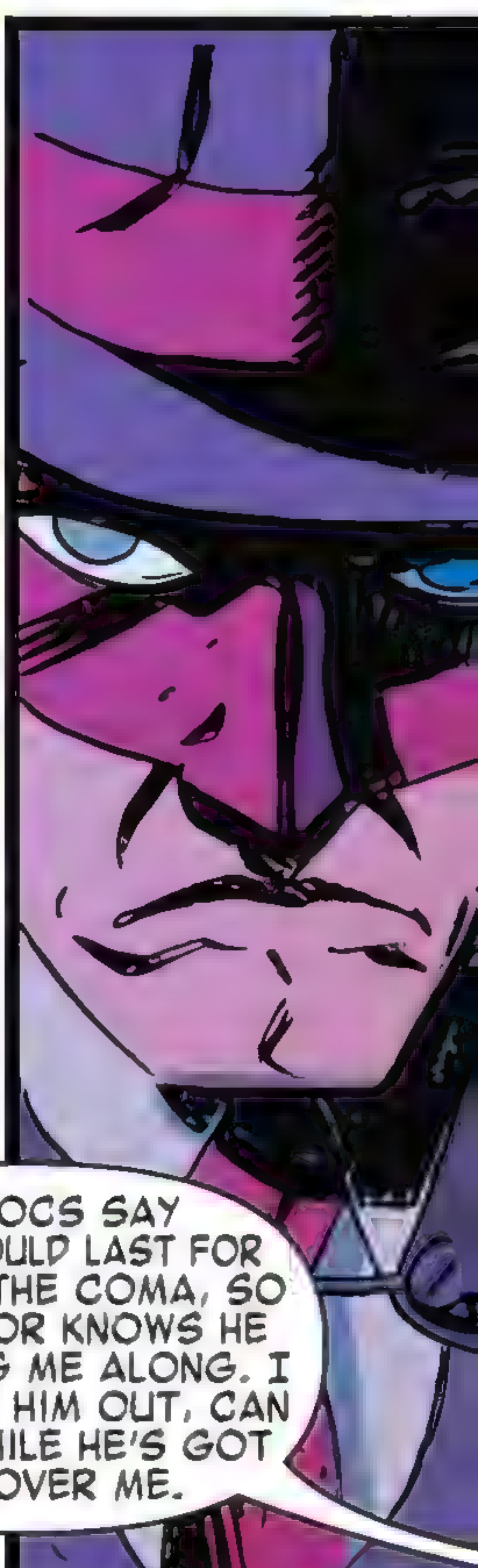
I KNOW WHAT YOU GOT HERE, BIG NOSE, AND I KNOW IT'S WORTH A LOT MORE THAN YOUR BOSS IS PAYING ME.



SO, I TURN EVERYTHING OVER TO CHANCELLOR BECAUSE HE'S GOING TO USE THIS FORMULA TO HELP MY DAUGHTER.

ONLY NOW HE'S HEMMING AND HAWING. HE'S NOT GIVING THE FORMULA UP UNTIL HE TURNS MY FAMILY INTO HIS OWN PRIVATE SECURITY FORCE.

THE DOCS SAY ANGELA COULD LAST FOR YEARS IN THE COMA, SO CHANCELLOR KNOWS HE CAN STRING ME ALONG. I CAN'T TAKE HIM OUT, CAN I? NOT WHILE HE'S GOT THIS OVER ME.

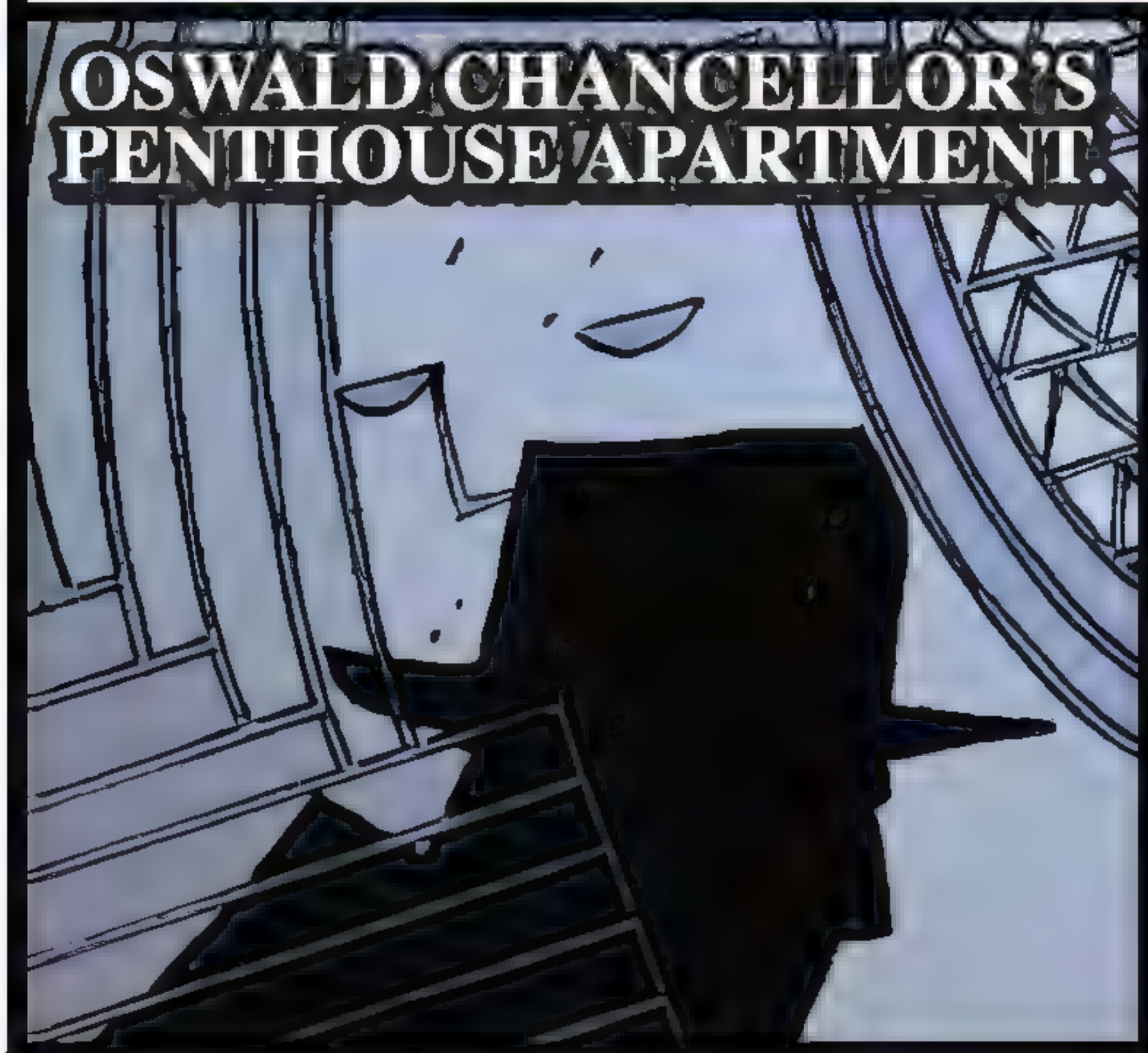




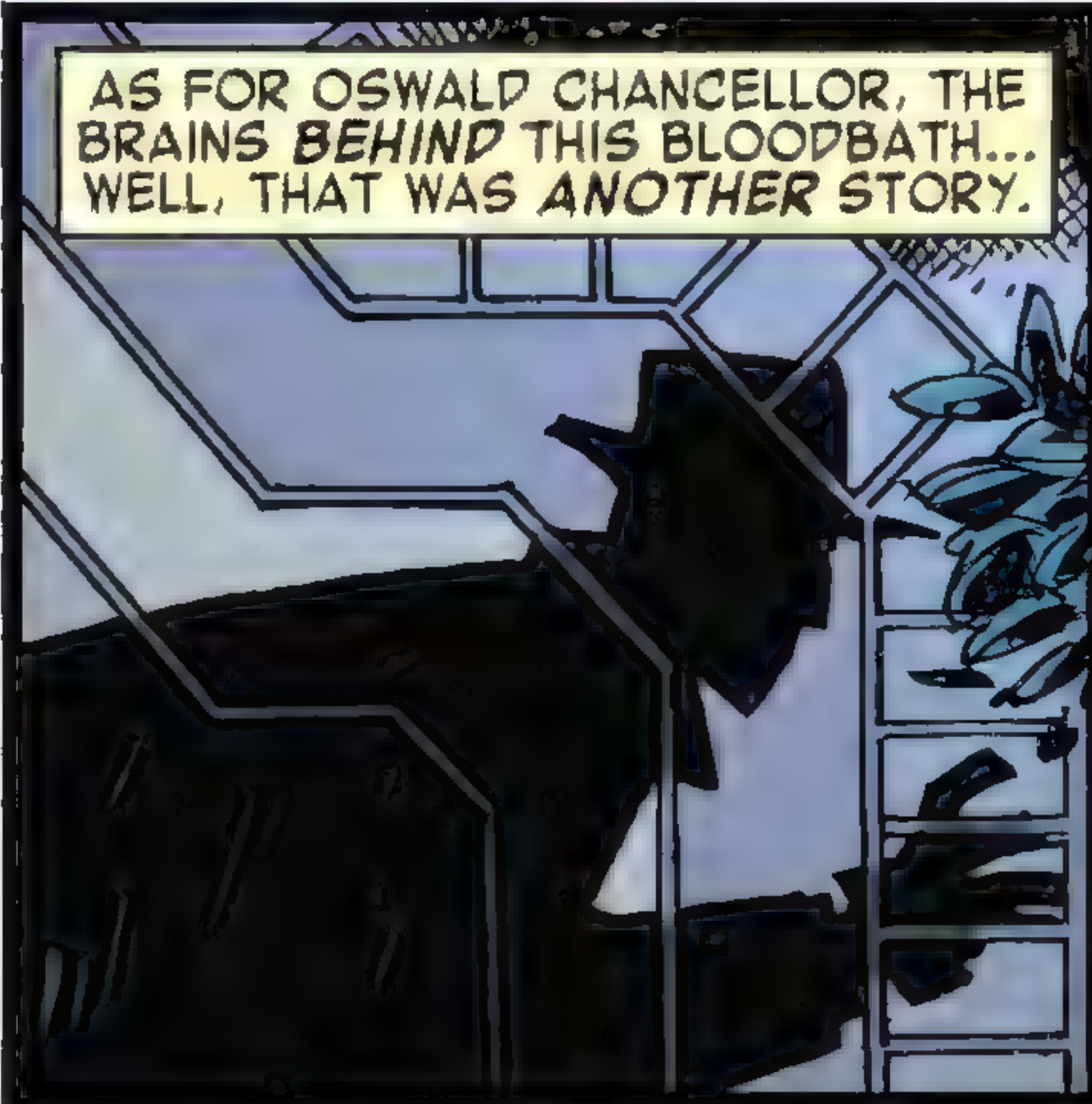
MANNINO WAS A **MONSTER**. HE'D KILLED COUNTLESS PEOPLE, DONE **TERRIBLE THINGS**.

BUT HE WAS ALSO A SAD, PATHETIC MAN, A FATHER WILLING TO GAMBLE **EVERYTHING** FOR HIS DAUGHTER.

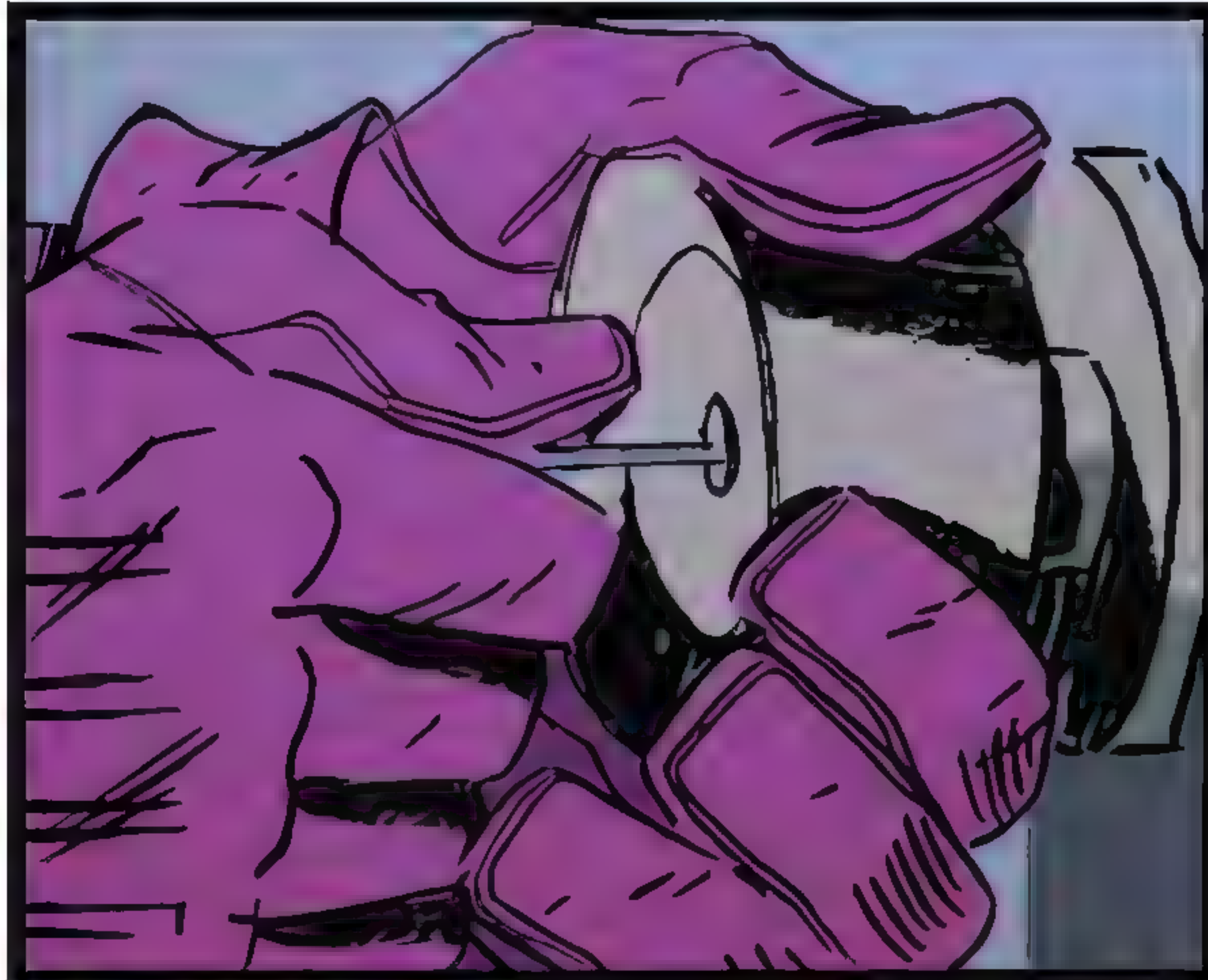
HE WOULD FACE JUSTICE, BUT NOT FROM THE PHANTOM REPORTER. WITH THE EVIDENCE I NOW KNEW I COULD GATHER, HE'D FACE THE POWER OF THE **PRESS**.



OSWALD CHANCELLOR'S PENTHOUSE APARTMENT.



AS FOR OSWALD CHANCELLOR, THE BRAINS **BEHIND** THIS BLOODBATH... WELL, THAT WAS **ANOTHER STORY**.



JEEPERS, DAD. I DIDN'T KNOW IT WAS GOING TO GO LIKE THIS. I'M **SORRY**.

YOU ARE A **FOOL**, EDMUND. YOU ALWAYS WERE. WHY DID YOU HAVE TO TELL JONES IN THE FIRST PLACE?

HE'S DIGGING UP MORE TROUBLE THAN I WOULD HAVE THOUGHT **POSSIBLE**.



I STILL HAD ONE QUESTION: HOW WOULD A GUY LIKE BILLY KNOW WHAT HE WAS LOOKING AT WHEN HE TOOK THE PROFESSOR'S NOTES?

NOW I HAD MY ANSWER.

IT TURNS OUT BILLY'S WIFE IS STILL ALIVE, AND SHE HAS A COPY OF THE FORMULA. LOOKS LIKE SHE HAS SOME IDEA OF WHAT IT **IS** TOO.

BUT MANNINO'S BEEN GOOD ENOUGH TO PUT HIS MEN AT MY DISPOSAL, AND I HAVE SOME ON THE WAY TO THE ROOM SHE'S RENTING NOW.

SHE WON'T BE A CONCERN FOR LONG.



I WAS CONSIDERING A MEASURED, SUBTLE APPROACH. HONESTLY.

BUT ONCE I HEARD ABOUT MOLLY, I KNEW THERE WAS NO TIME. I HAD TO GET TO HER BEFORE MANNINO'S GOONS.

HELLO, RICHARD. LOVE THE LOOK.

WE'VE KNOWN YOU TOO LONG NOT TO RECOGNIZE YOU UNDER THAT MASK.

YOU'RE NOT GOING TO LOVE YOUR OWN LOOKS IF YOU DON'T TELL ME WHERE MOLLY IS!



IT TAKES A REAL HERO TO THREATEN AN OLD MAN.



JUST BACK OFF SLOWLY, DICK.

THEY SAY SOME OF THOSE NEW HEROES ARE IMMUNE TO BULLETS. I'M BETTING YOU'RE NOT ONE OF THOSE.



CRACK

AAHHH!



THE FORMULA DOESN'T JUST PROVIDE LIFE, DICK, BUT HEALTH. UNBELIEVABLE HEALTH.

I HAVE FIVE TIMES THE MUSCLE DENSITY OF A MAN YOUR AGE.

LET'S SEE WHAT YOUR BOXING PRIZES GET YOU NOW!



UNBELIEVABLE. I GAVE THAT PUNCH ALL I HAD. IT WOULD HAVE STAGGERED THE TOUGHEST THUG MANNINO COULD THROW AT ME.

CHANCELLOR DIDN'T BUDGE AN INCH.



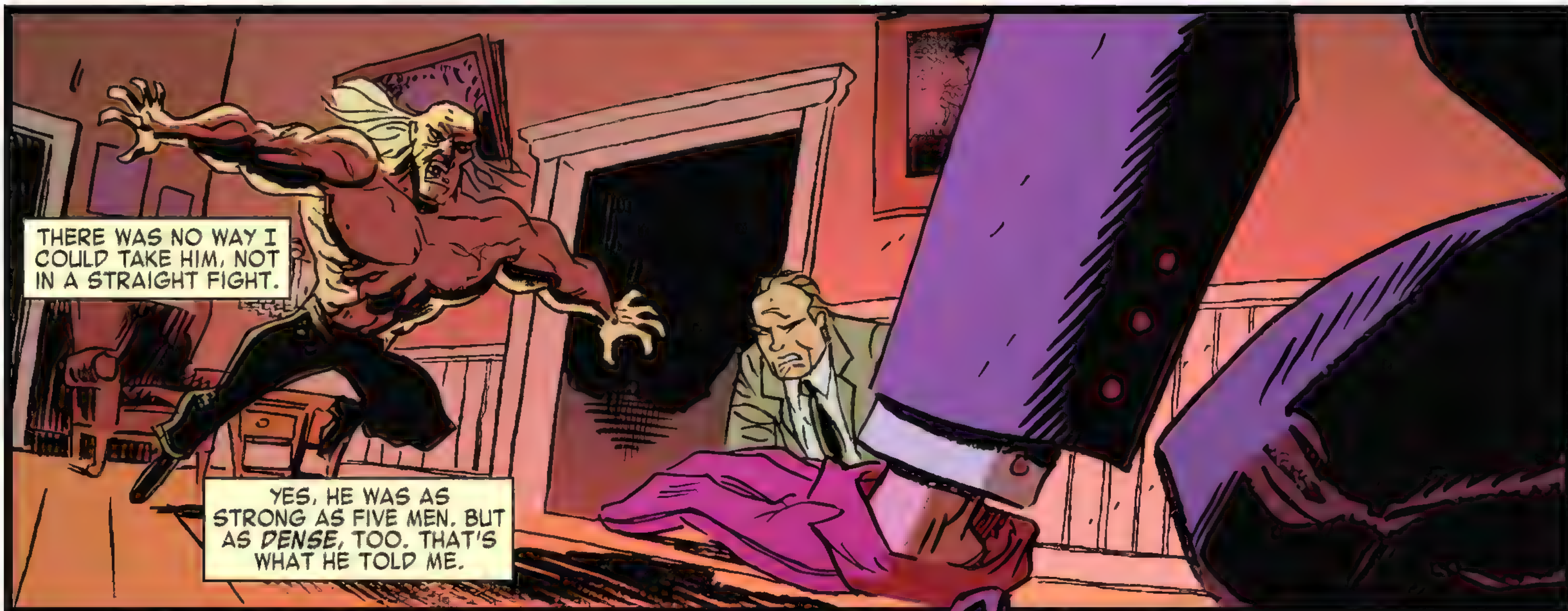
ALWAYS A PLEASURE CHATTING WITH YOU, RICHARD. BUT IT'S TIME YOU LET YOURSELF OUT!



I THOUGHT I WAS GOING THROUGH THE WINDOW, BUT I BOUNCED OFF.

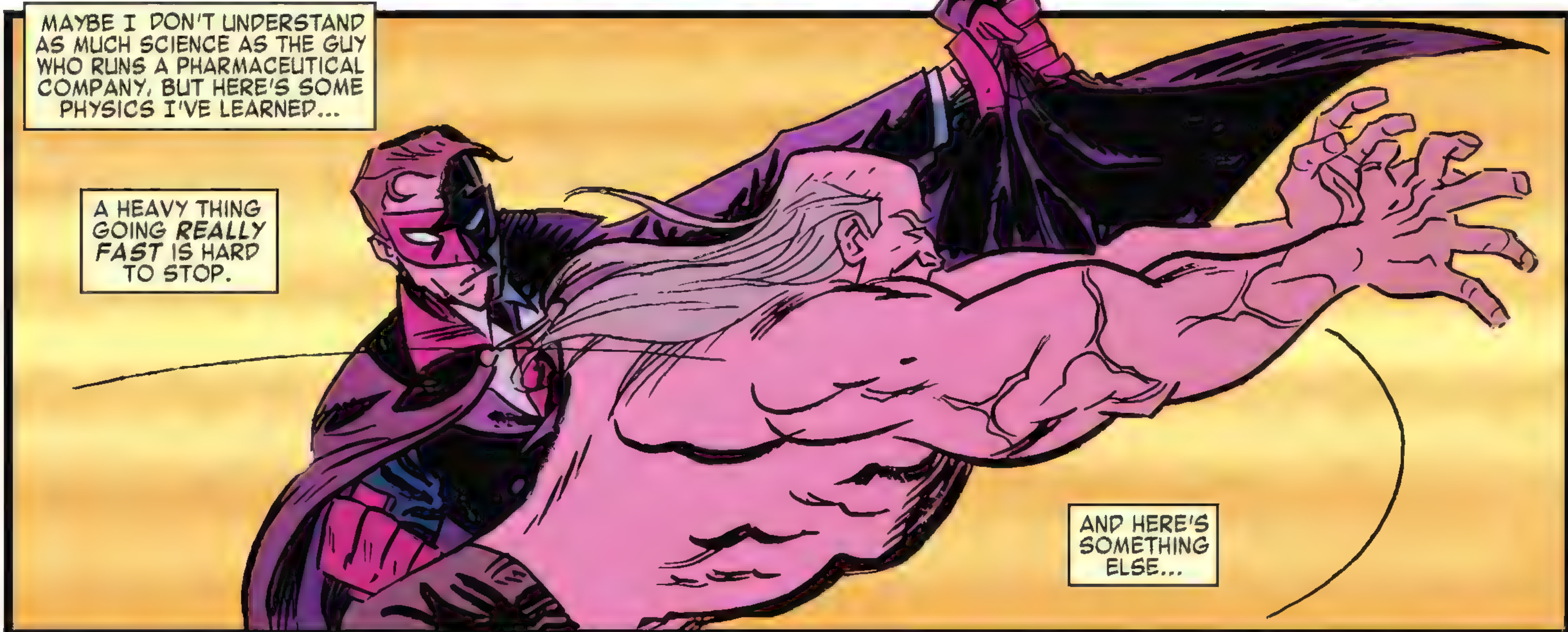
KK
KR
KK
KK

IT DIDN'T FEEL SO GOOD, BUT IT BEAT FALLING 15 STORIES...THAT'S MY BEST GUESS, ANYWAY.



THERE WAS NO WAY I COULD TAKE HIM, NOT IN A STRAIGHT FIGHT.

YES, HE WAS AS STRONG AS FIVE MEN. BUT AS *DENSE*, TOO. THAT'S WHAT HE TOLD ME.



MAYBE I DON'T UNDERSTAND AS MUCH SCIENCE AS THE GUY WHO RUNS A PHARMACEUTICAL COMPANY, BUT HERE'S SOME PHYSICS I'VE LEARNED...

A HEAVY THING GOING *REALLY* FAST IS HARD TO STOP.

AND HERE'S SOMETHING ELSE...

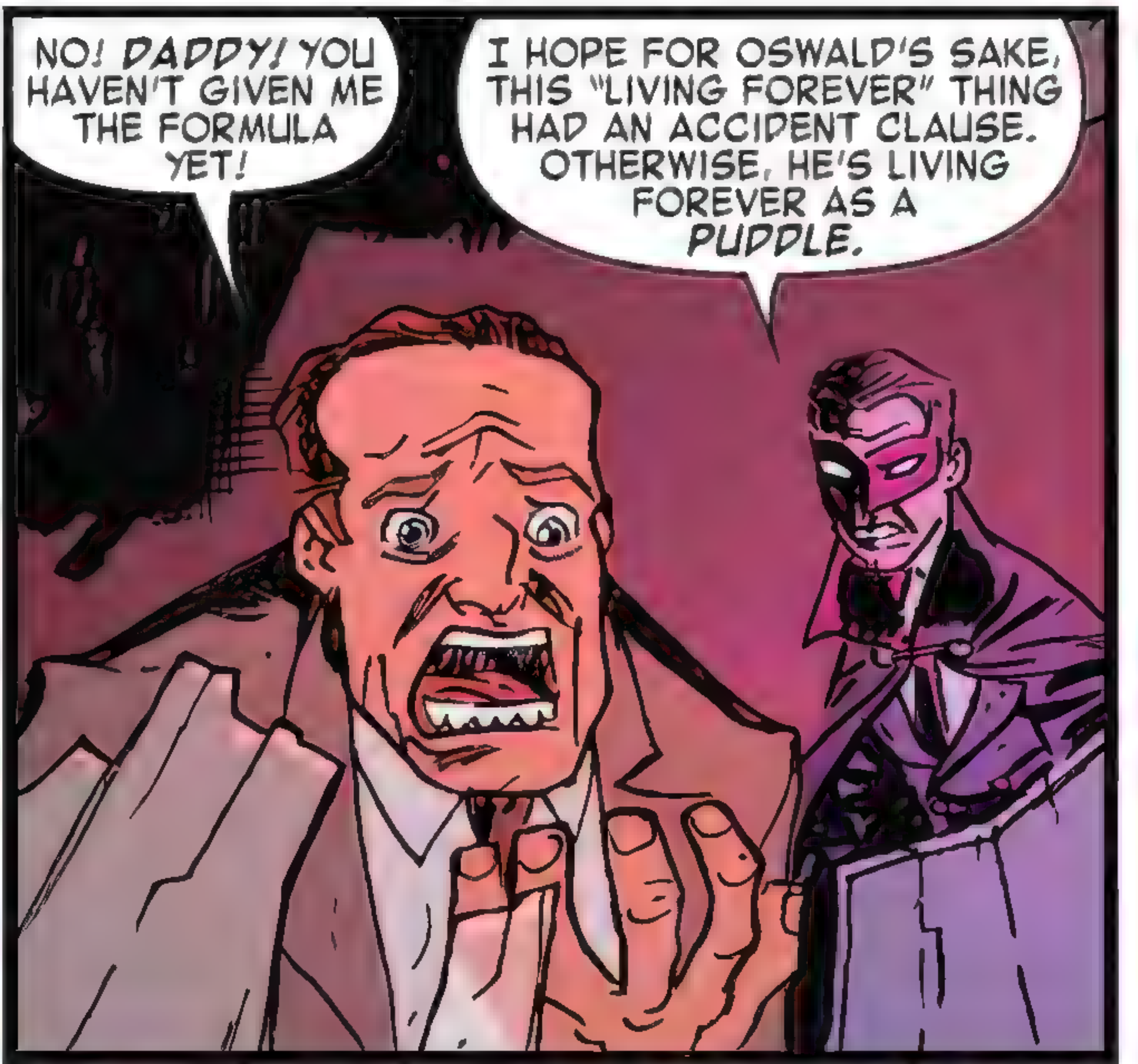
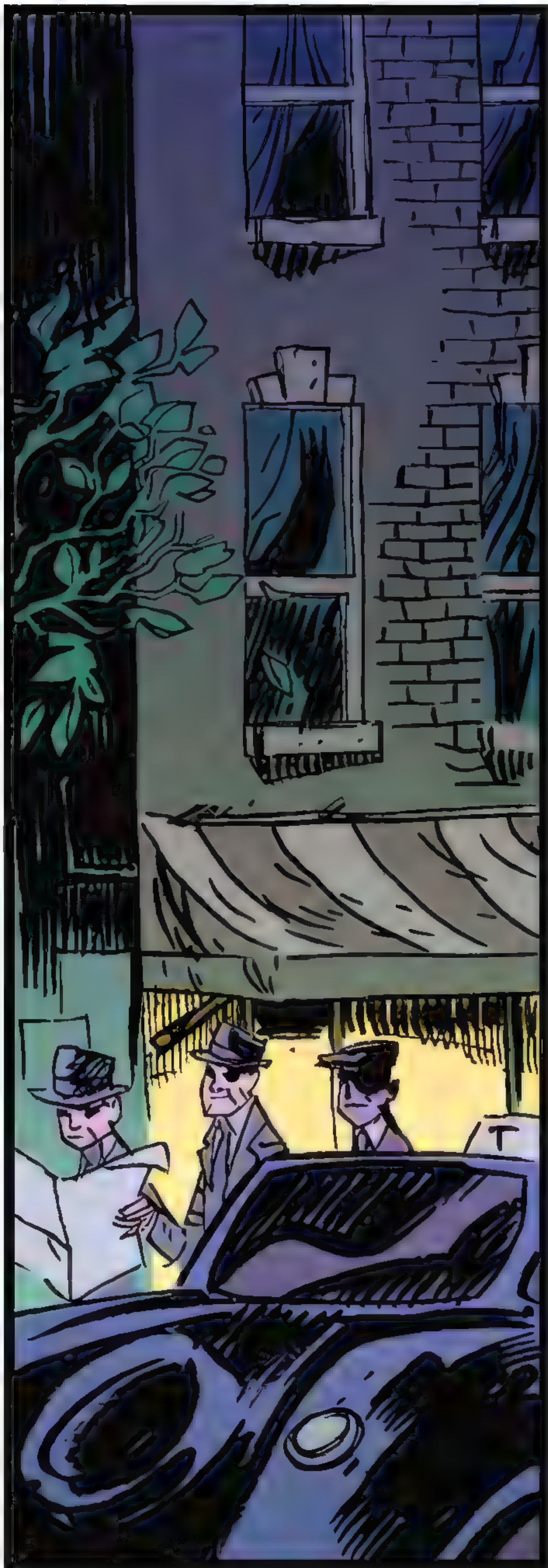


GLASS THAT WILL DEFLECT A NORMAL MAN MIGHT BREAK UNDER THE WEIGHT OF A GUY WITH THE MUSCLE DENSITY OF FIVE.

PRETTY SURE I READ THAT IN A BOOK SOMEWHERE.



NO! I WANT TO LIVE FOREVERRRRRR...







NEW YORK CITY.
TODAY.

THAT NIGHT I
LEARNED THE MOST
IMPORTANT LESSONS
OF BEING A MASKED
HERO.

THE
POWER. THE
LIMITS.



AS
THE PHANTOM
REPORTER I COULD
GO PLACES, DISCOVER
SECRETS, AND CONFRONT
EVIL IN A WAY DICK
JONES NEVER
COULD.



BUT BEING
DICK JONES OFFERS
A KIND OF *SUBTLETY*
AND *NUANCE* THE
PHANTOM REPORTER
LACKS.

YOU BALANCE
THEM OUT AS BEST
YOU CAN, AND YOU
LEARN FROM THE
MISTAKES.



SO WAS THE
PHILOSOPHER'S
STONE *REAL*? AND
DO YOU THINK MOLLY
REALLY HAD THE
FORMULA?



IT WAS
PROBABLY JUST
AN EARLY VERSION
OF THOSE STEROIDS
ATHLETES USE
TODAY.

HONESTLY? I
DON'T THINK THERE
EVER WAS A REAL
FORMULA. AND MOLLY
SULLIVAN NEVER
HAD IT.



BUT I CAN
LIVE WITH
THAT.

THE END

DARING

APRIL

COMICS

MYSTERY

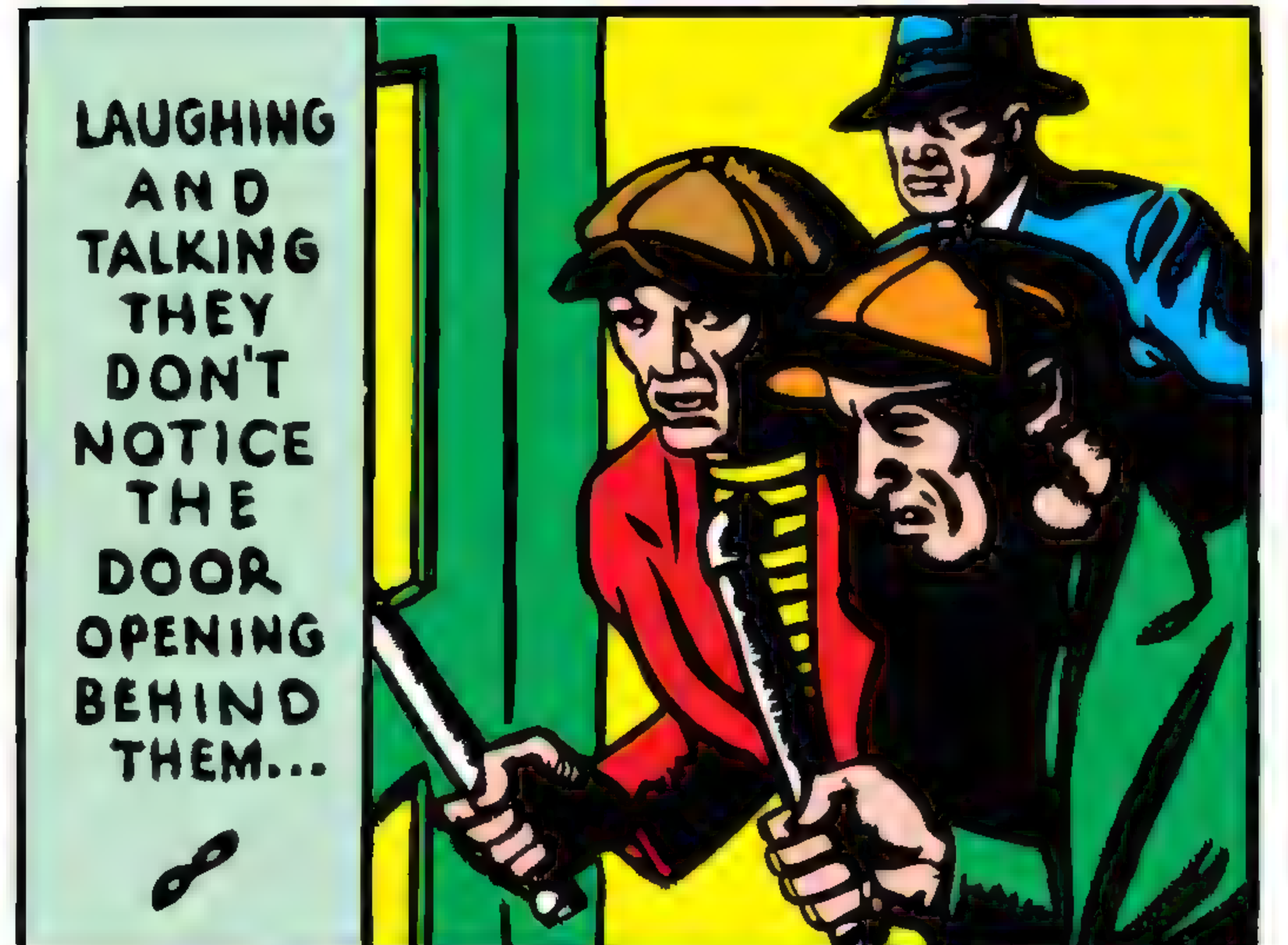
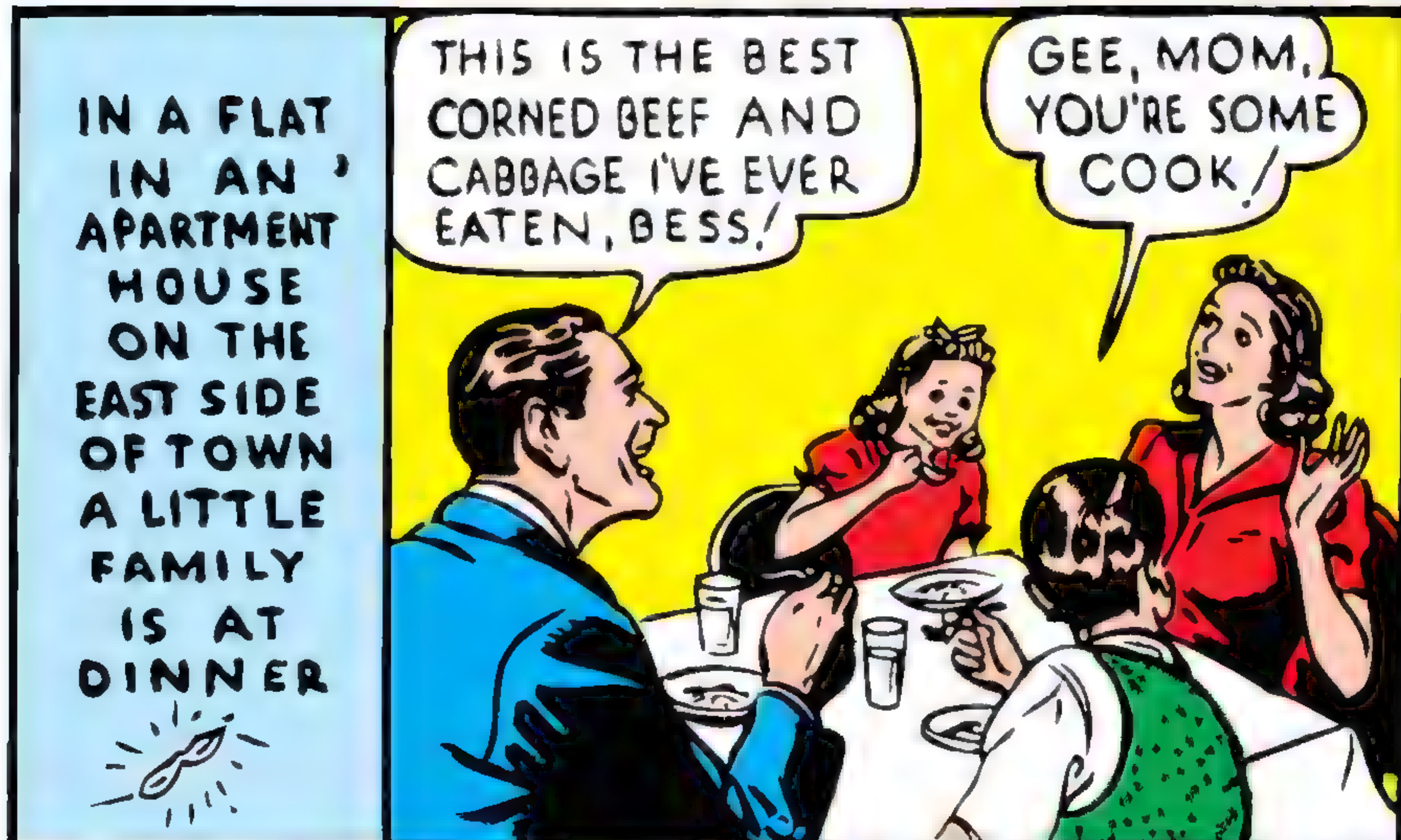
Every Feature
Brand New!

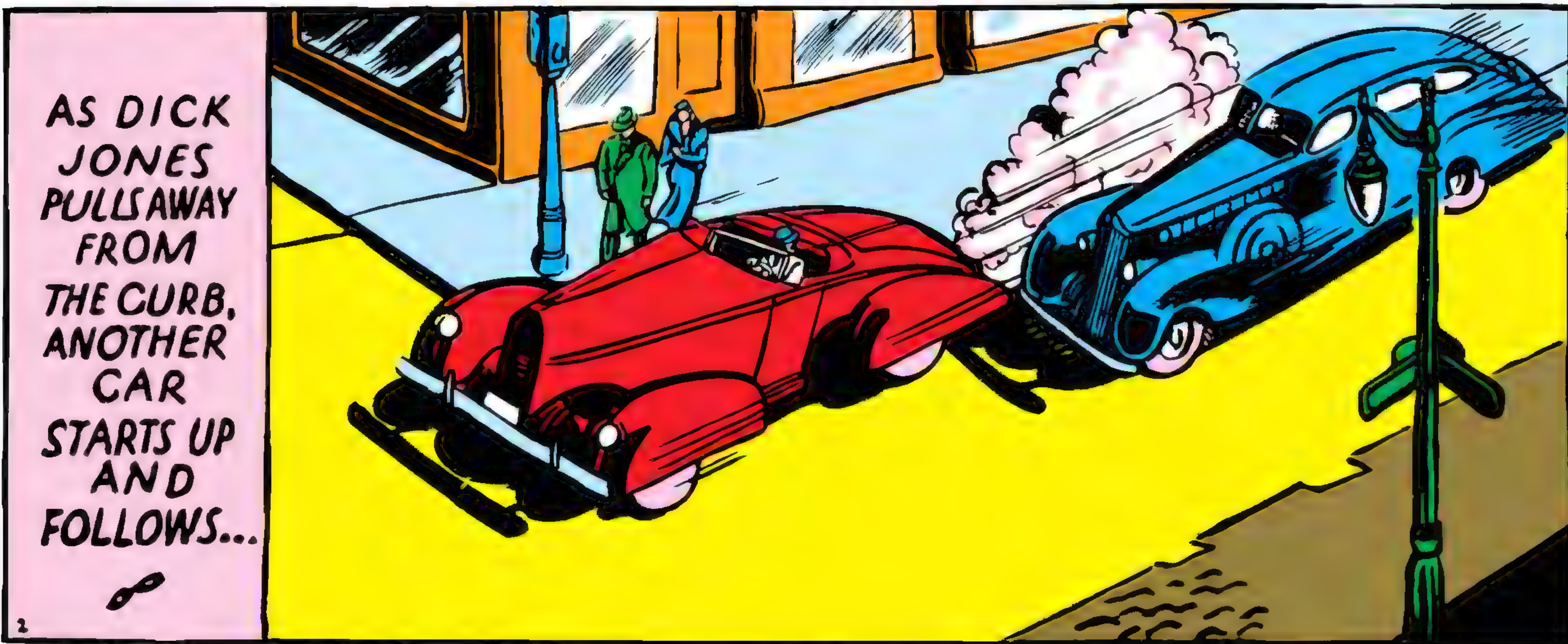
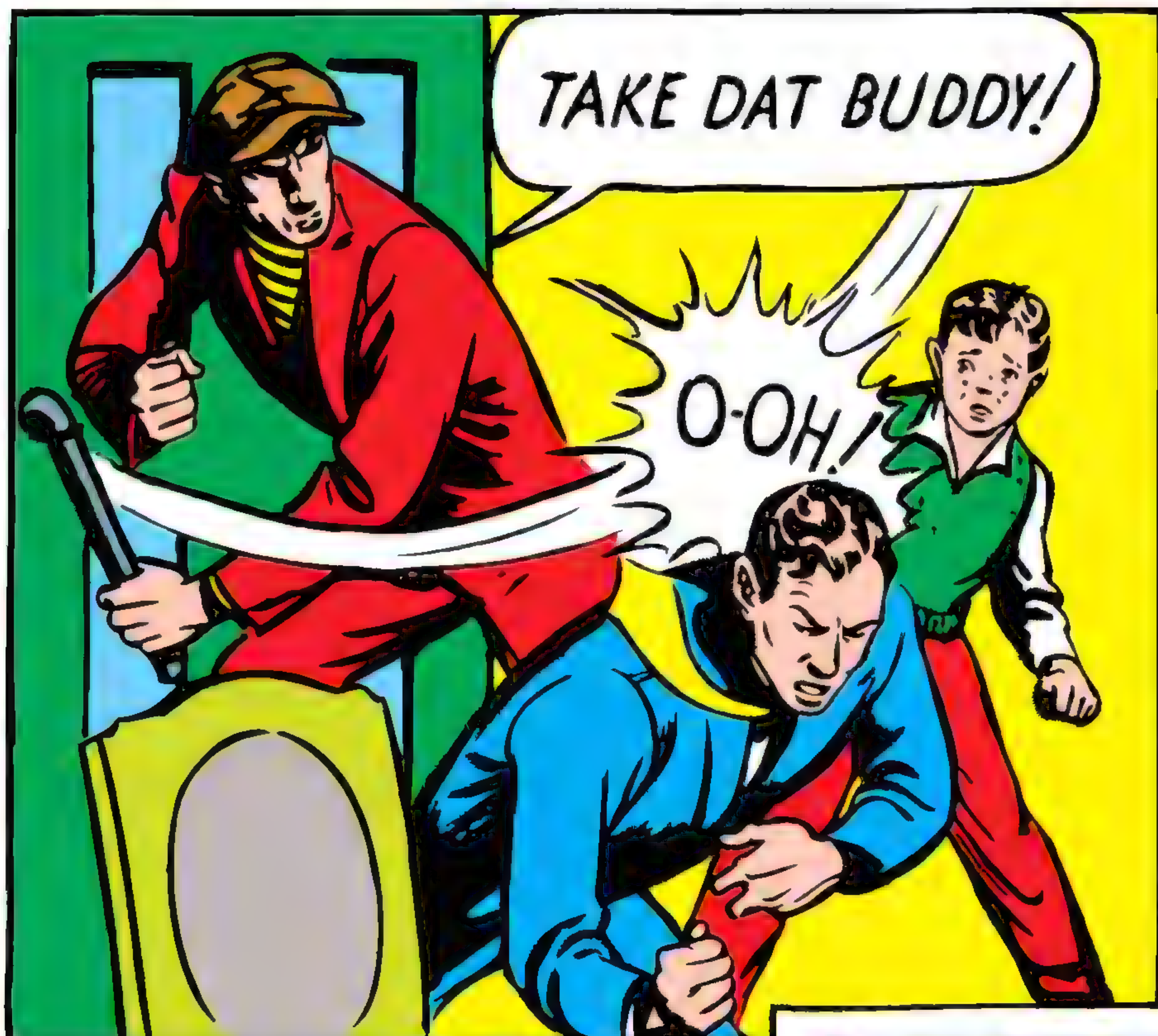
No. 3



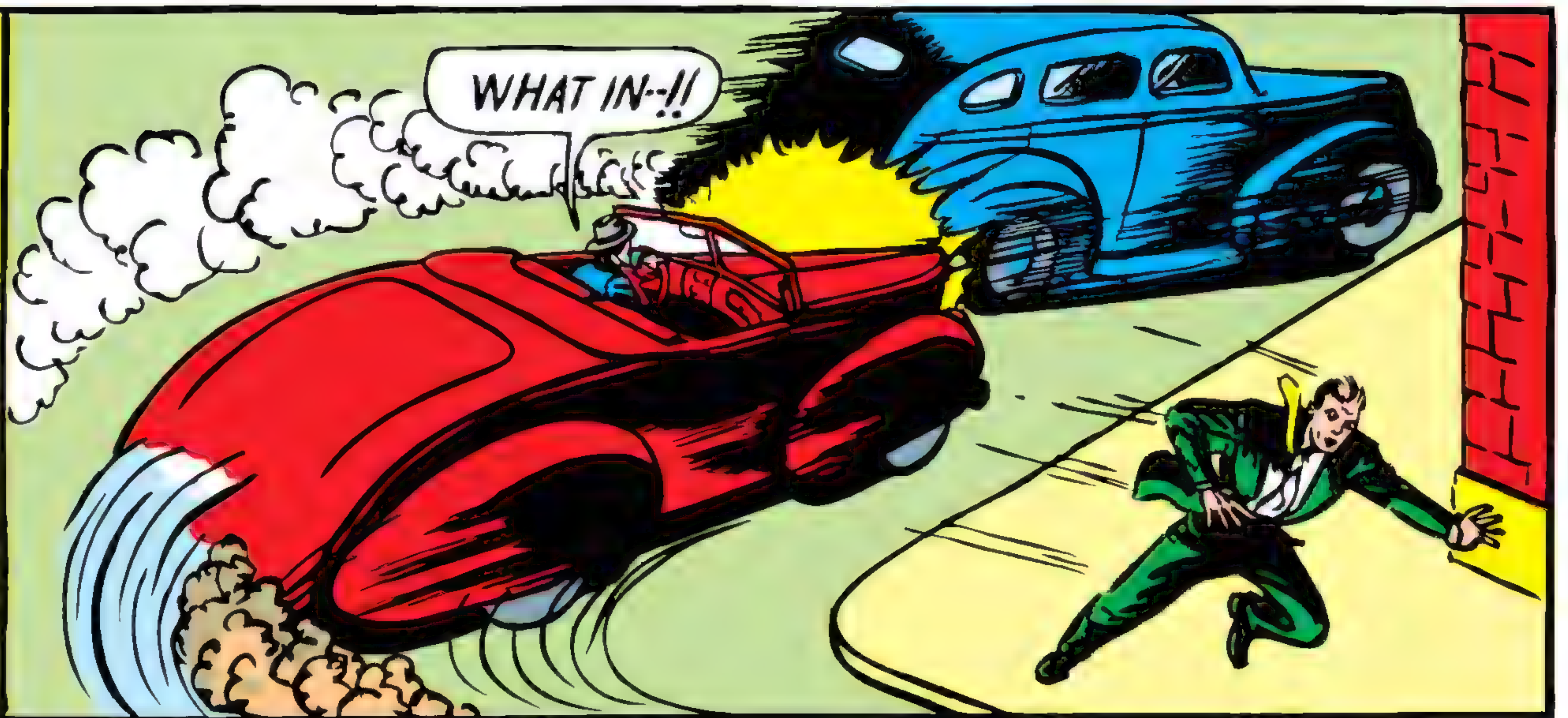
THE PURPLE MASK
PHANTOM REPORTER
MARVEX — Super Robot
TROJAK — Jungle King
BREEZE BARTON — In
the **MIRACLE CITY**
Plus other great
features

against terrific odds
it was do or die for
THE PURPLE MASK!





... AND
SUDDENLY
SHOOTS
IN FRONT
OF HIS
CAR AS
HE TURNS
EAST!



WELL FOR PETE'S SAKE!
TALK ABOUT YOUR
COINCIDENCES!

DICK JONES!
WHAT A CO-
INCIDENCE INDEED!



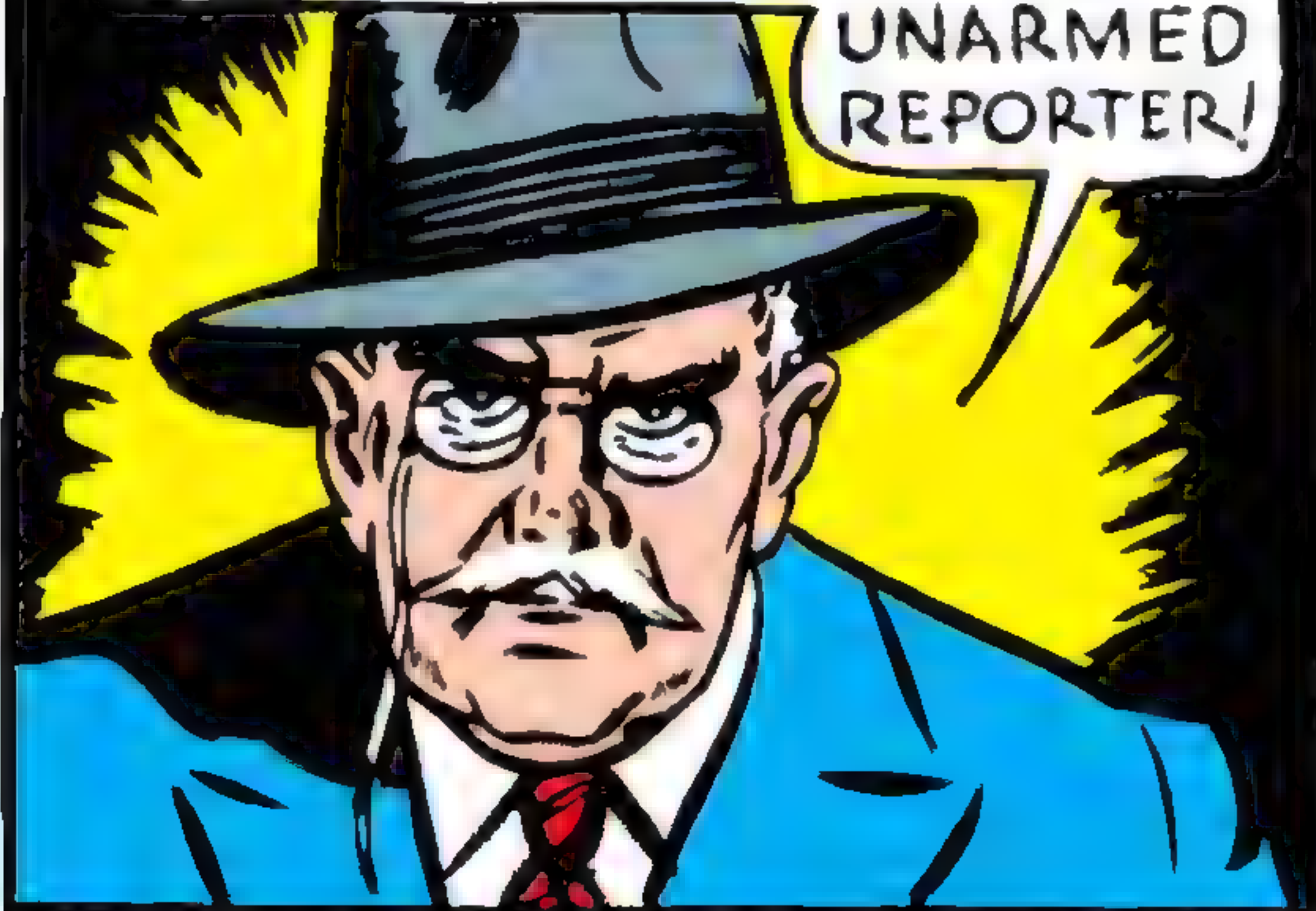
THE CUB REPORTER LEAPS OUT ANGRILY...BUT SEES THAT
THE OTHER CAR BELONGS TO HIS FRIEND, THE PARK COMMISSIONER.

SO YOU'VE BEEN PUT ON THAT
EAST SIDE MESS, DICK YOU'RE TREAD-
ING DANGEROUS GROUND MY BOY!

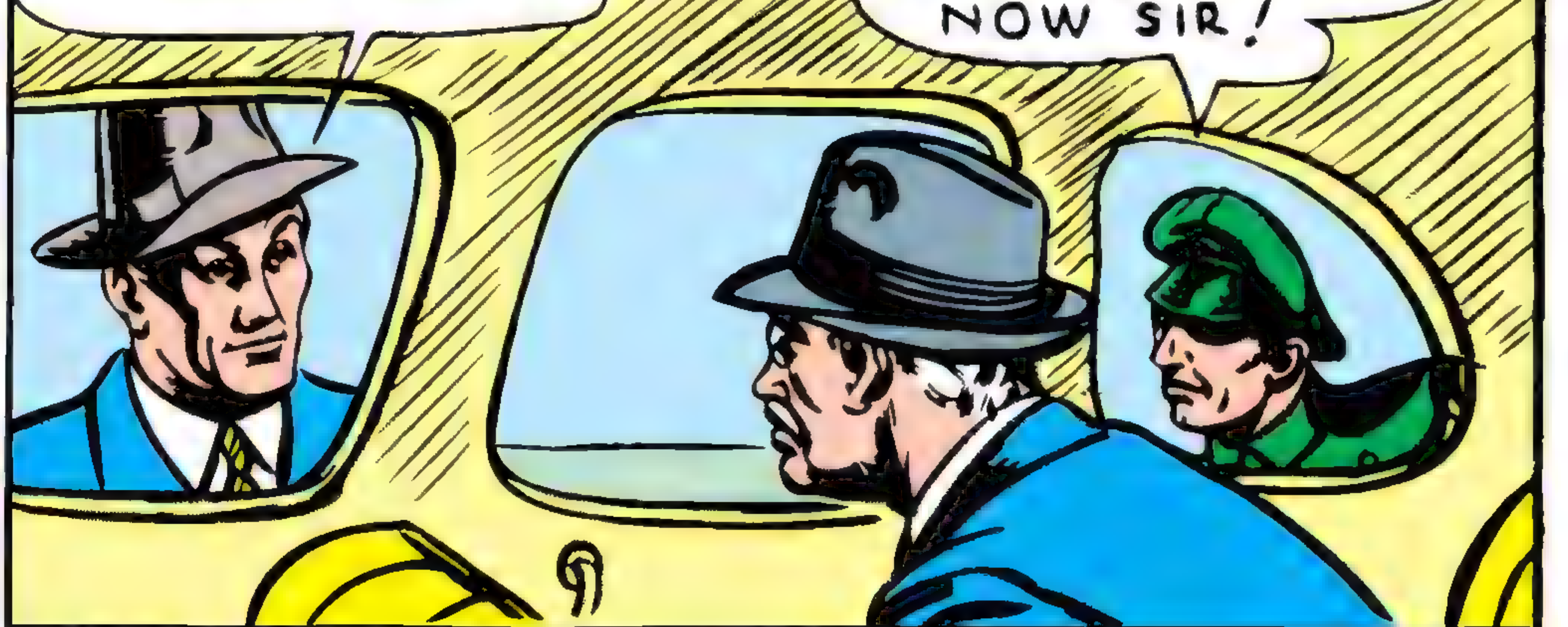
YES SIR, I
GUESS IT IS
PRETTY DANGEROUS!



TAKE MY ADVICE SON, AND TELL YOUR
BOSS THAT'S A JOB FOR THE
POLICE TO HANDLE--- NOT AN
UNARMED
REPORTER!



YES SIR, I THINK MAYBY
I'LL DO THAT SIR!



THE CAR IS FREE
NOW SIR!

THAT
NIGHT
THE CITY
EDITOR
OF THE
DAILY
EXPRESS
GETS A
PHONE
CALL...

HE WILL NOT GIVE
HIS NAME SIR!



LISTEN, MUG, LAY OFF DAT EAST
SIDE BIZNESS, SEE? KEEP ACTIN'
FUNNY, SEE, AN' WE'LL MAKE YOUR
FAM'LY NUMBER EIGHT! DIS IS
YOUR FINAL
WARNIN'!!





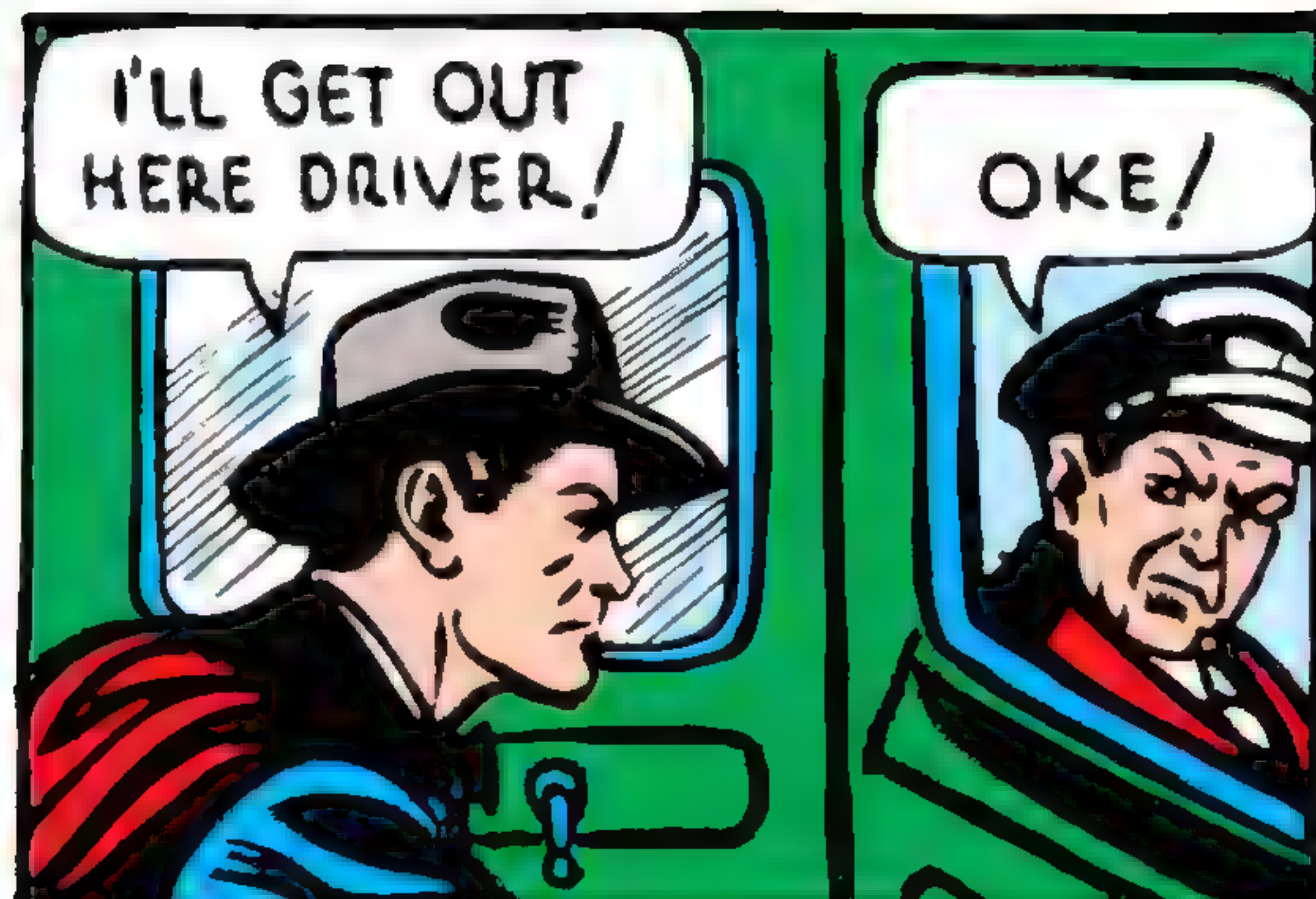
EVENING MR VAN ERGEN!
NICE EVENING, SIR!

HELLO.
SAUNDERS

-AND AT MIDNIGHT, EXACTLY ON THE STROKE
OF TWELVE, A FAMOUS PARK AVENUE PLAYBOY
EMERGES FROM HIS SWANKY APARTMENT HOUSE--



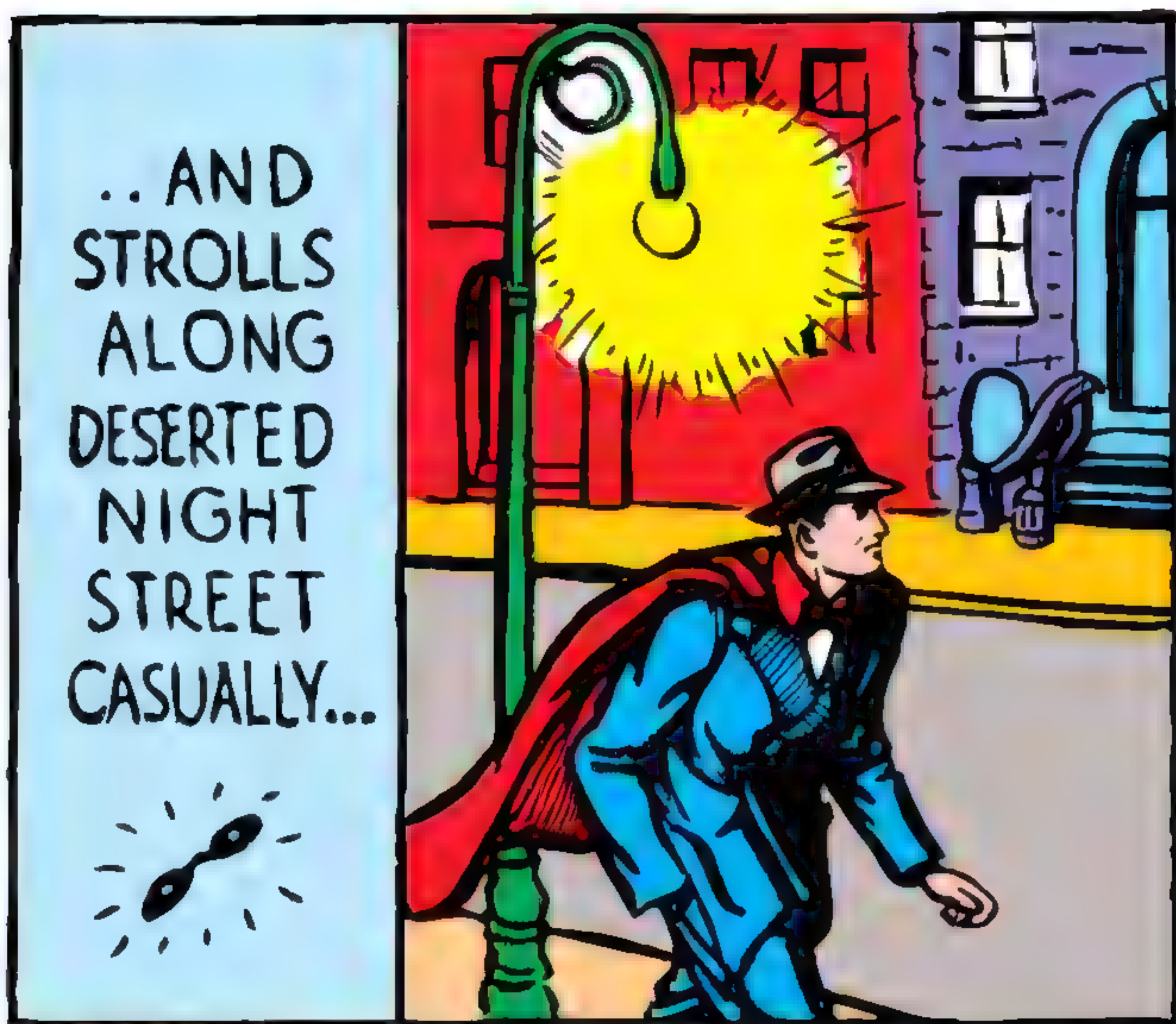
HIS DADDY LEAVES HIM \$50,000,000. & WHAT
DOES HE DO-- GOES OUT EVERY MORNING AT 9
& EVERY NIGHT AT 12 --& THAT'S ALL ANY-
BODY KNOWS ABOUT HIM! A
NICE GENTLEMAN MR VAN
ERGEN, BUT A QUEER 'UN!



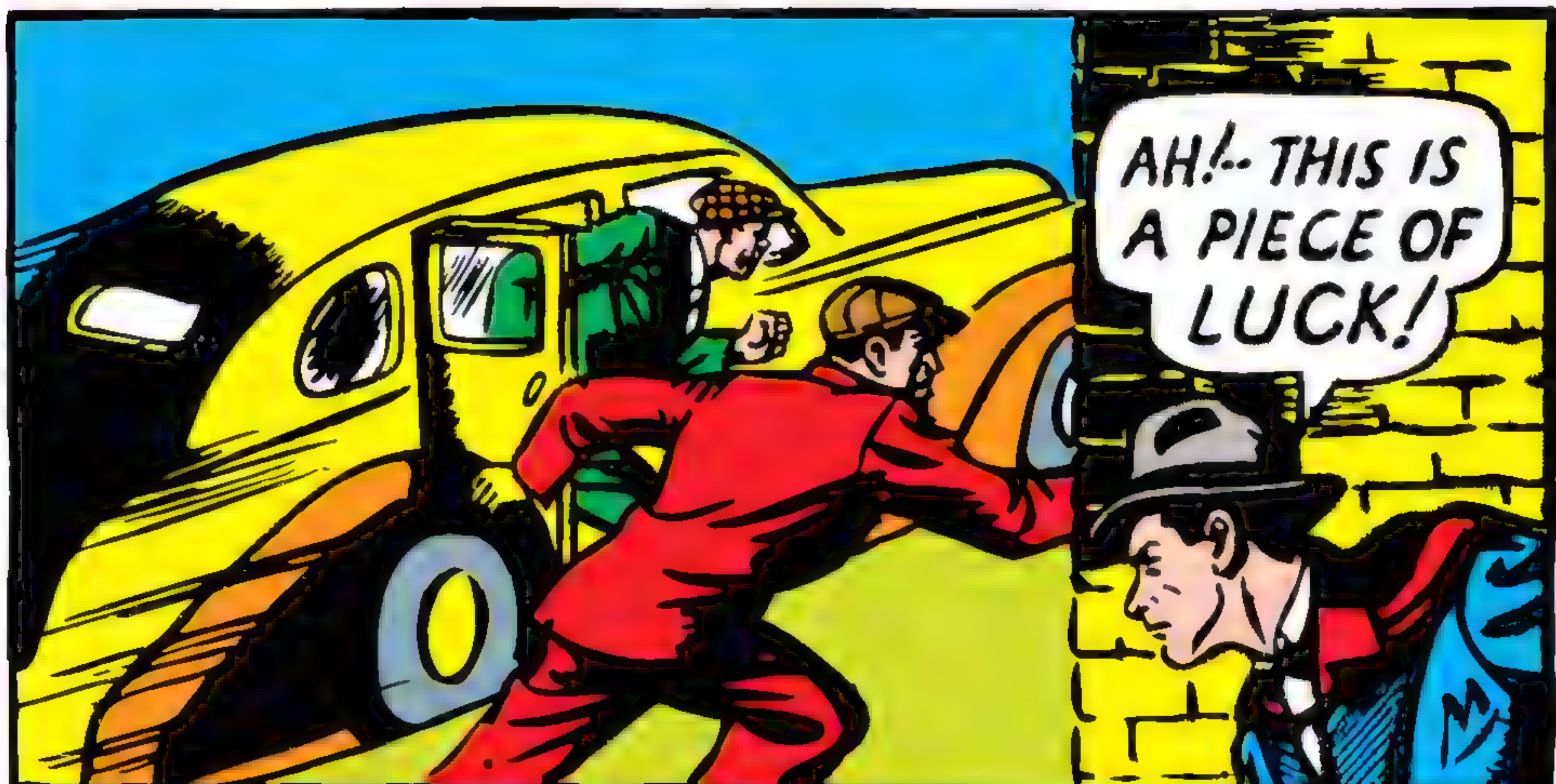
I'LL GET OUT
HERE DRIVER!

OKE!

SWITCHING TAXIS THREE TIMES IN ORDER
TO ESCAPE ANYONE WHO MIGHT DECIDE TO
FOLLOW HIM, THE PLAYBOY REACHES THE EAST SIDE...

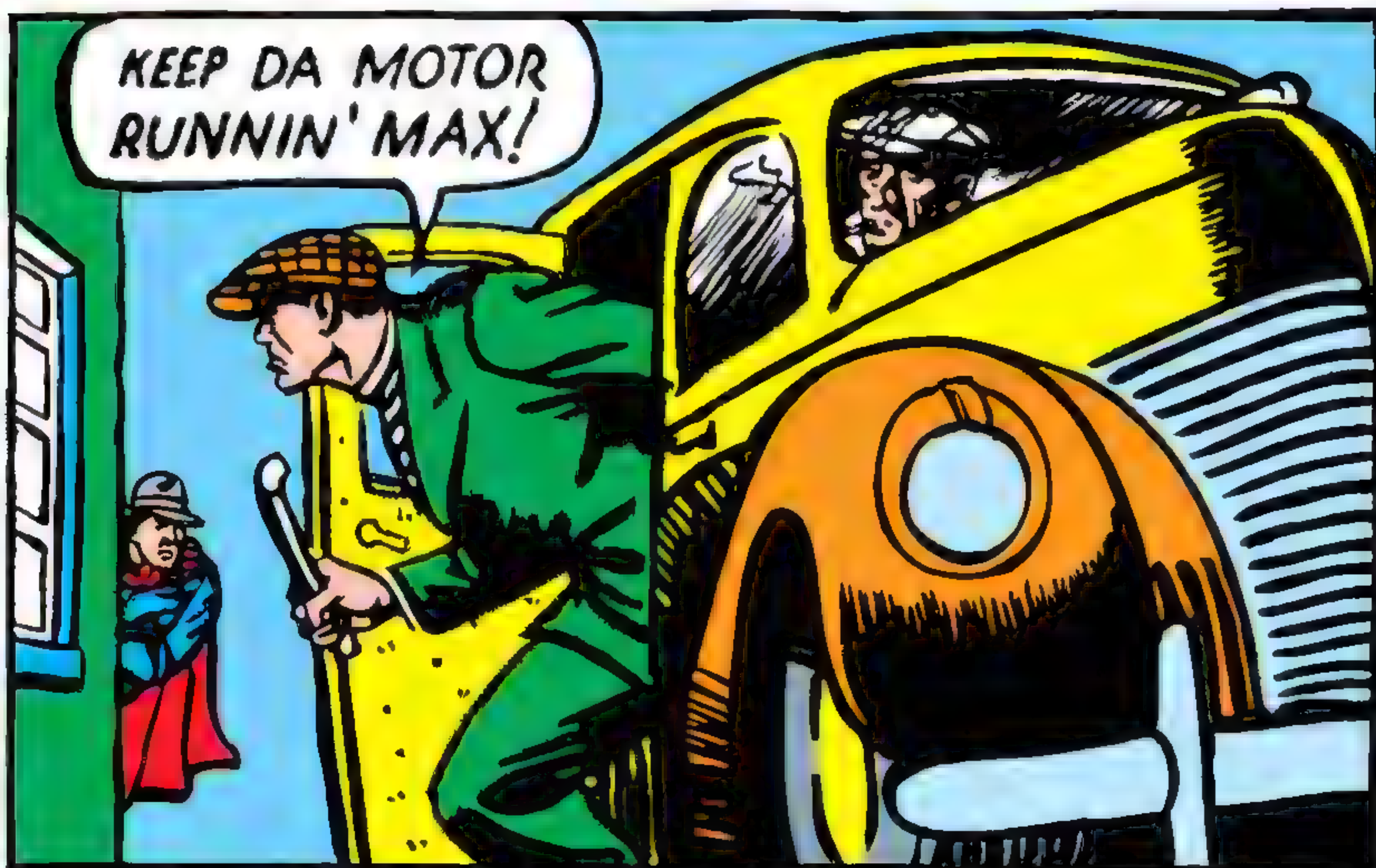


.. AND
STROLLS
ALONG
DESERTED
NIGHT
STREET
CASUALLY...



AH!-- THIS IS
A PIECE OF
LUCK!

...FINALLY SEES SOMETHING VERY INTERESTING!



KEEP DA MOTOR
RUNNIN' MAX!



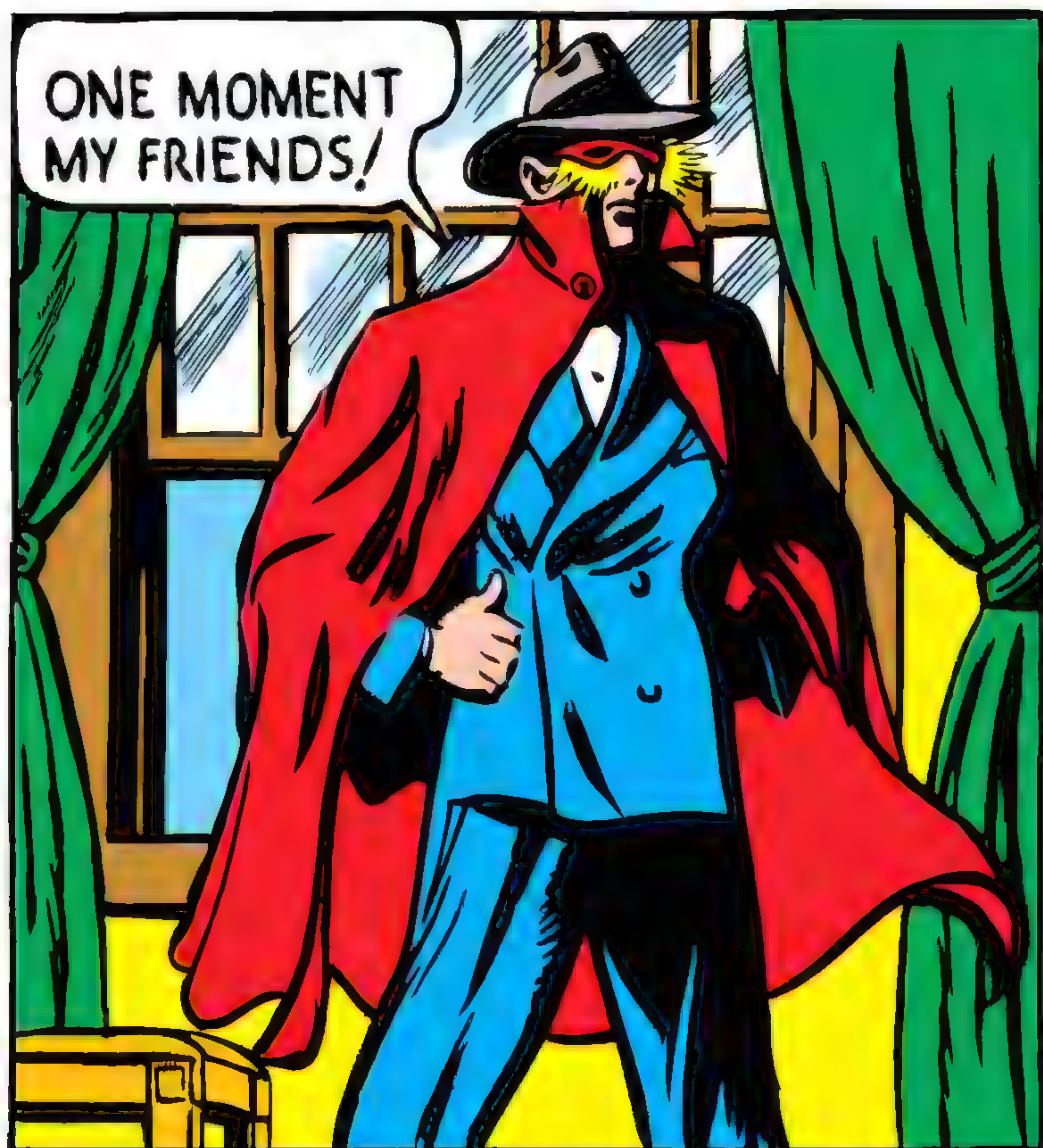
C'MON, CHIP, GIT DAT
DOOR OPEN!

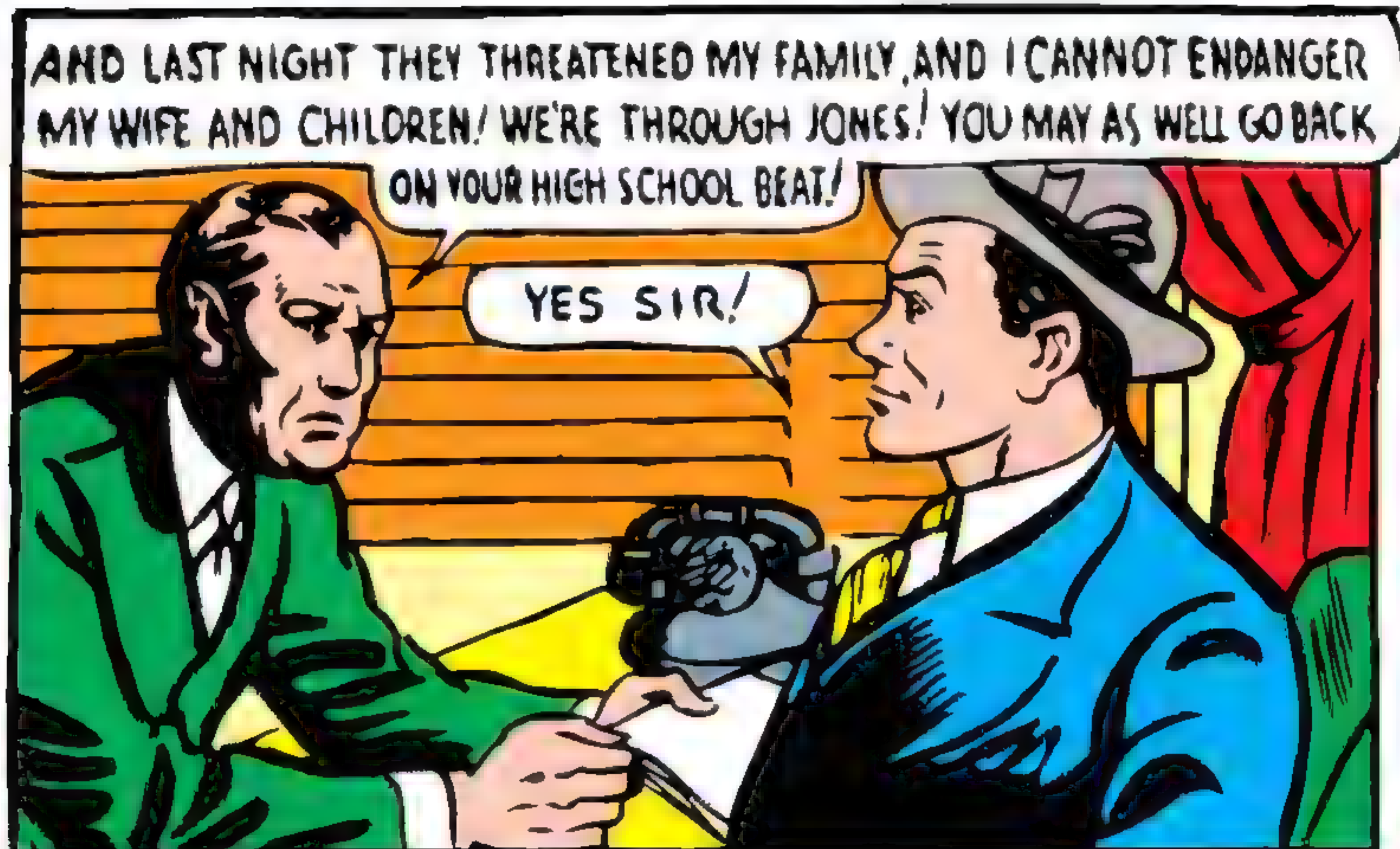
DIS IS A
TOUGH BABY!



OH HARRY,
WHAT--!!

OKAY,
MASSACRE 'EM!

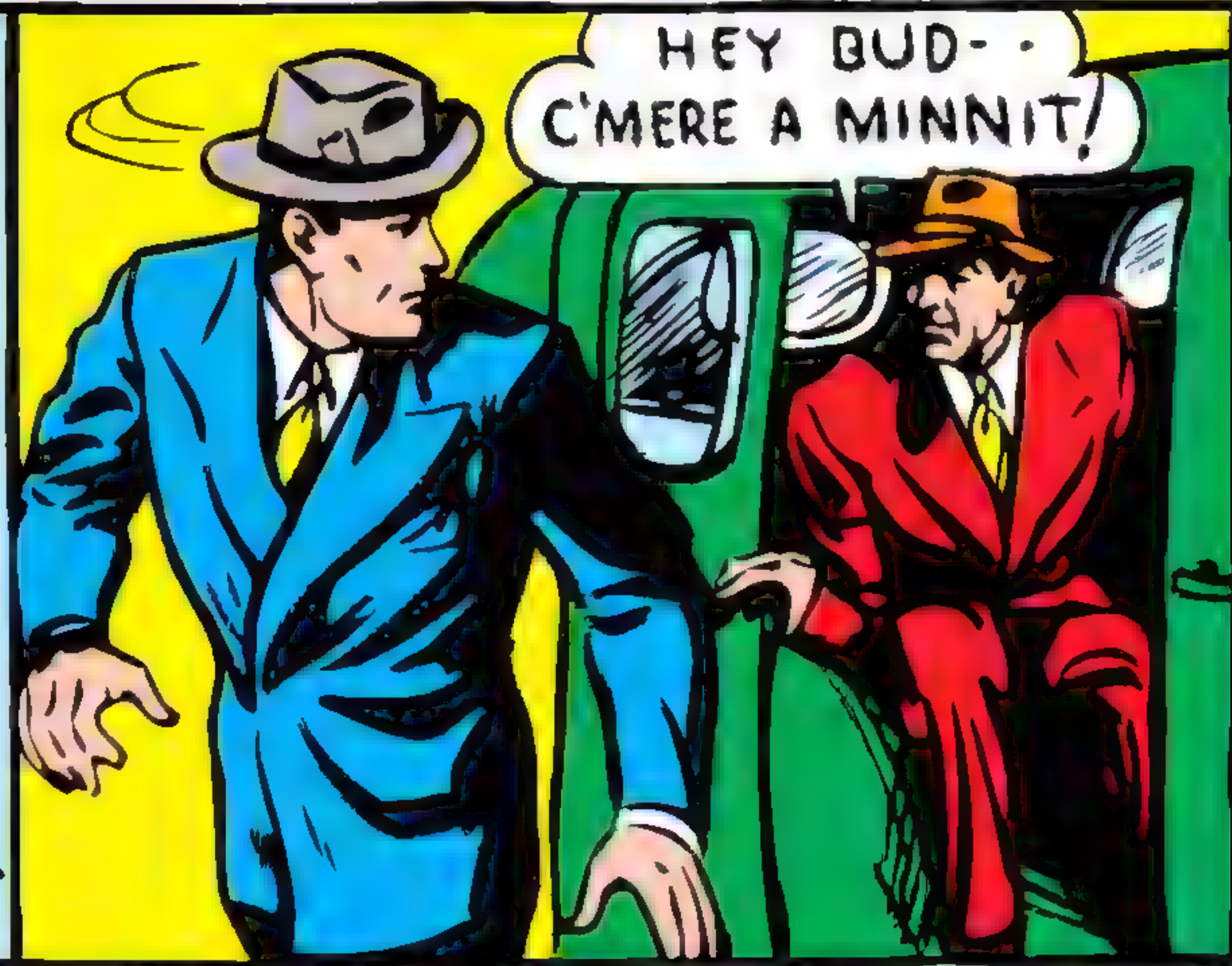




AND LAST NIGHT THEY THREATENED MY FAMILY, AND I CANNOT ENDANGER MY WIFE AND CHILDREN! WE'RE THROUGH JONES! YOU MAY AS WELL GO BACK ON YOUR HIGH SCHOOL BEAT!

YES SIR!

BUT THE CUB REPORTER SEEMS TO HAVE A FEW IDEAS OF HIS OWN & HE SPENDS THE DAY JUST STANDING IN FRONT OF THE APARTMENT HOUSE IN WHICH THE KILLERS LAST STRUCK... & SHORTLY AFTER 4 IN THE AFTERNOON...



HEY BUD-- C'MERE A MINNIT!



WHAT IN--!!--- HAVEN'T YOU MADE SOME MISTAKE?

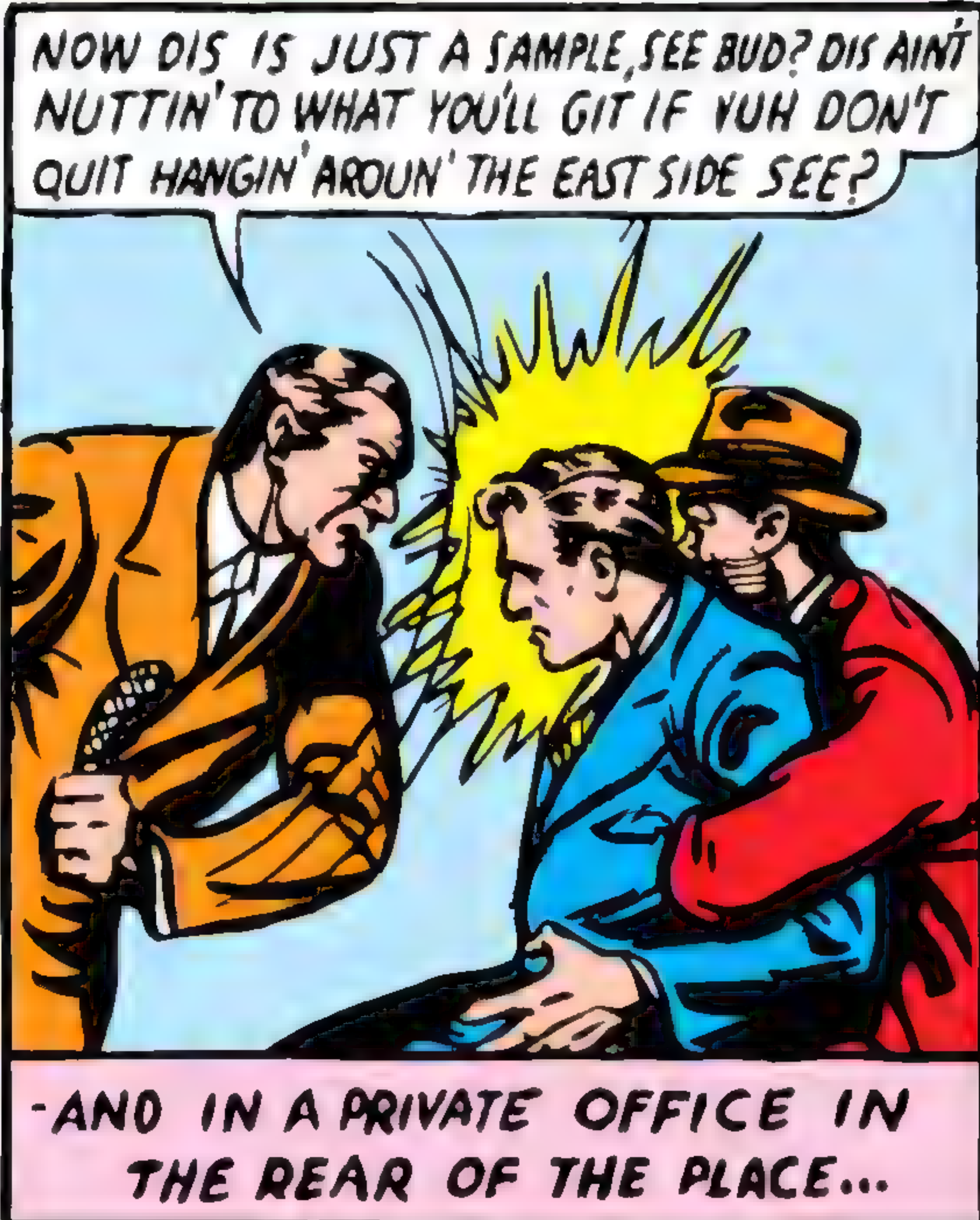
O'KAY, INTA DA BACKA DA BUS WID'IM!

THE THUGS TAKE THE CUB REPORTER TO A NIGHT CLUB IN THE TOUGH PART OF TOWN!



BUT WHERE ARE YOU TAKING ME?

JES' KEEP DA TRAP SHUT, SEE BUD?

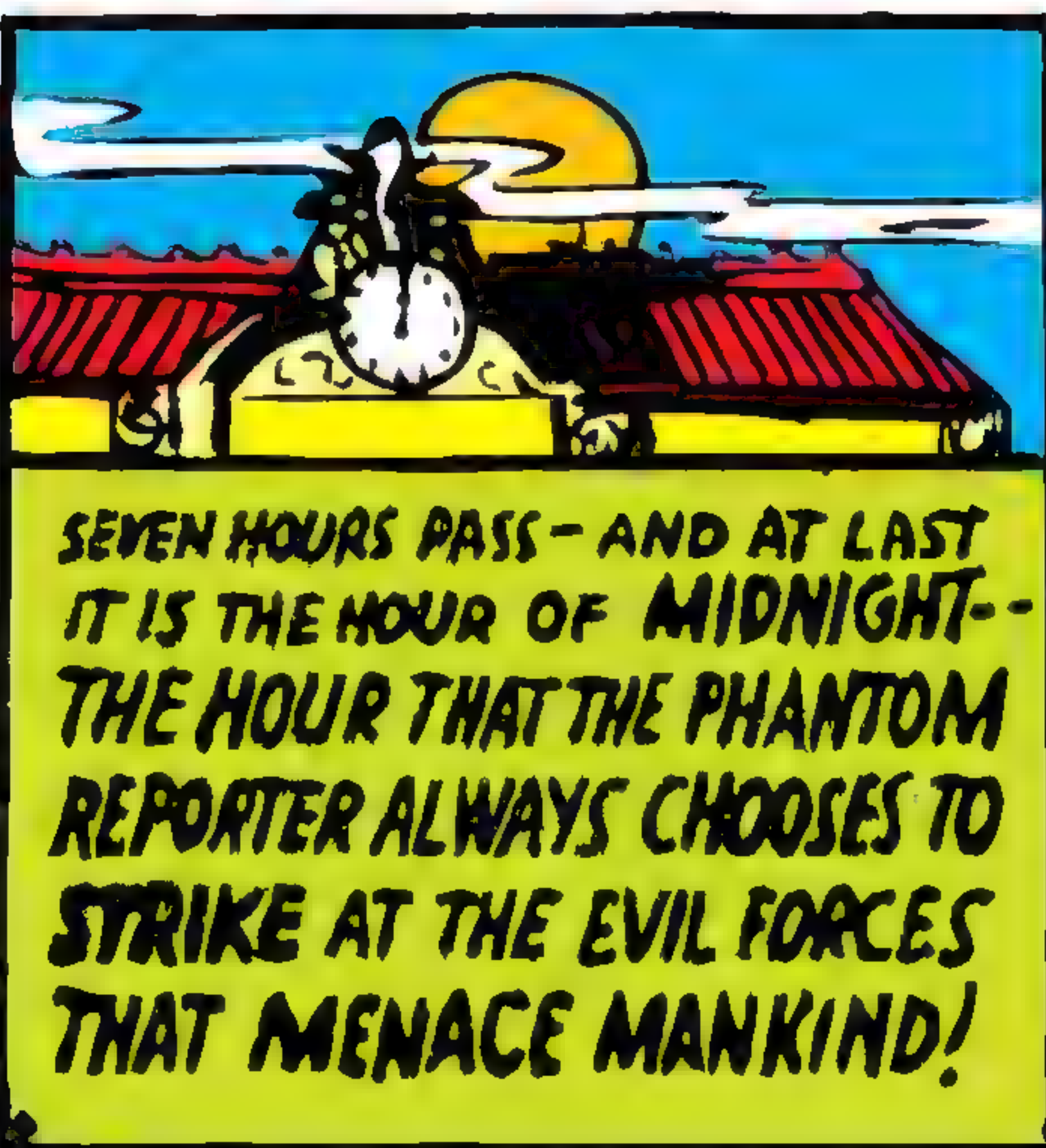


NOW DIS IS JUST A SAMPLE, SEE BUD? DIS AINT NUTTIN' TO WHAT YOU'LL GIT IF YUH DON'T QUIT HANGIN' AROUN' THE EAST SIDE SEE?

-AND IN A PRIVATE OFFICE IN THE REAR OF THE PLACE...



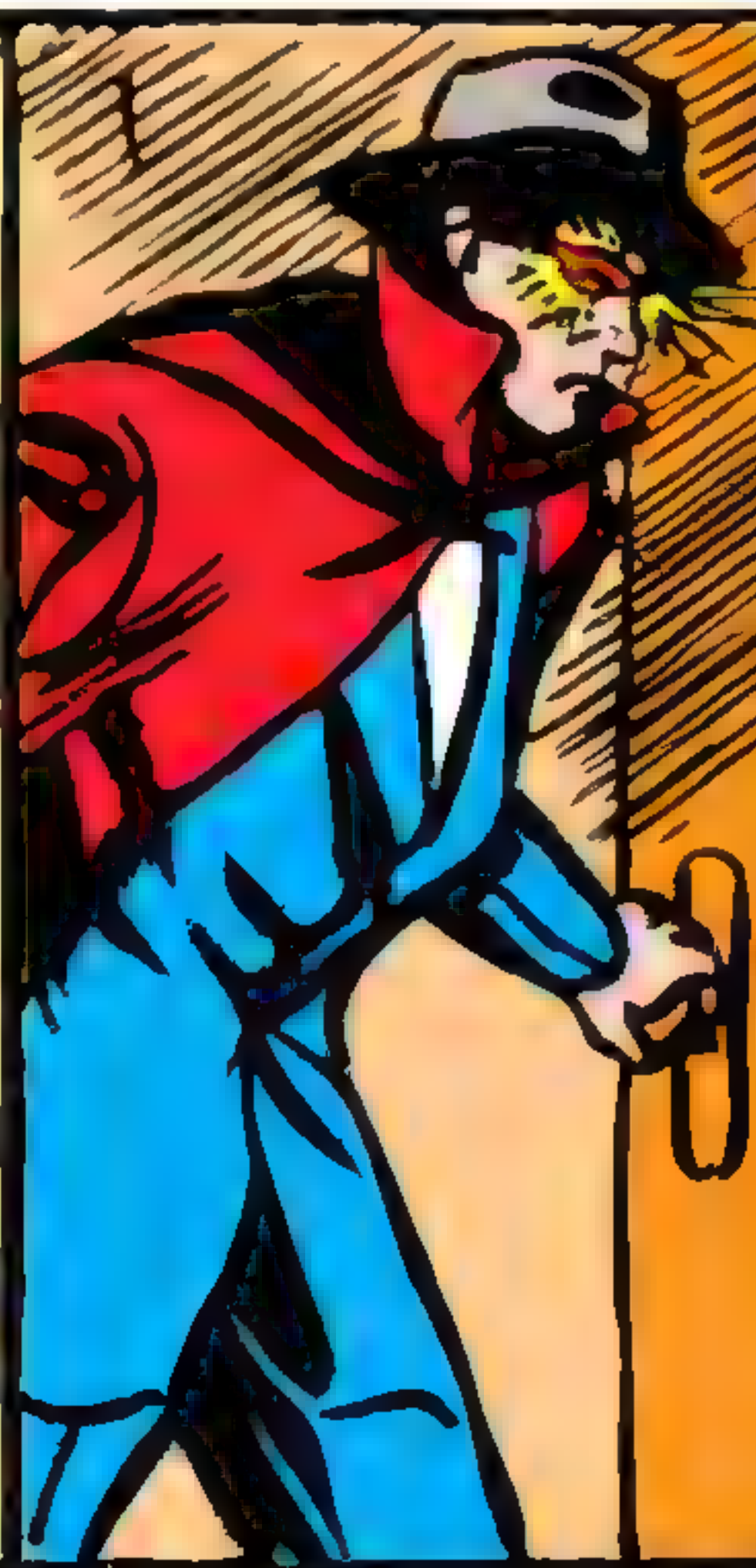
AN YUH KIN WISE UP THE REST OF THEM DAILY EXPRESS NINNIES WHUT THEY'LL GIT IF THEY COME POKIN' AROUN'!



SEVEN HOURS PASS-- AND AT LAST IT IS THE HOUR OF MIDNIGHT-- THE HOUR THAT THE PHANTOM REPORTER ALWAYS CHOOSES TO STRIKE AT THE EVIL FORCES THAT MENACE MANKIND!

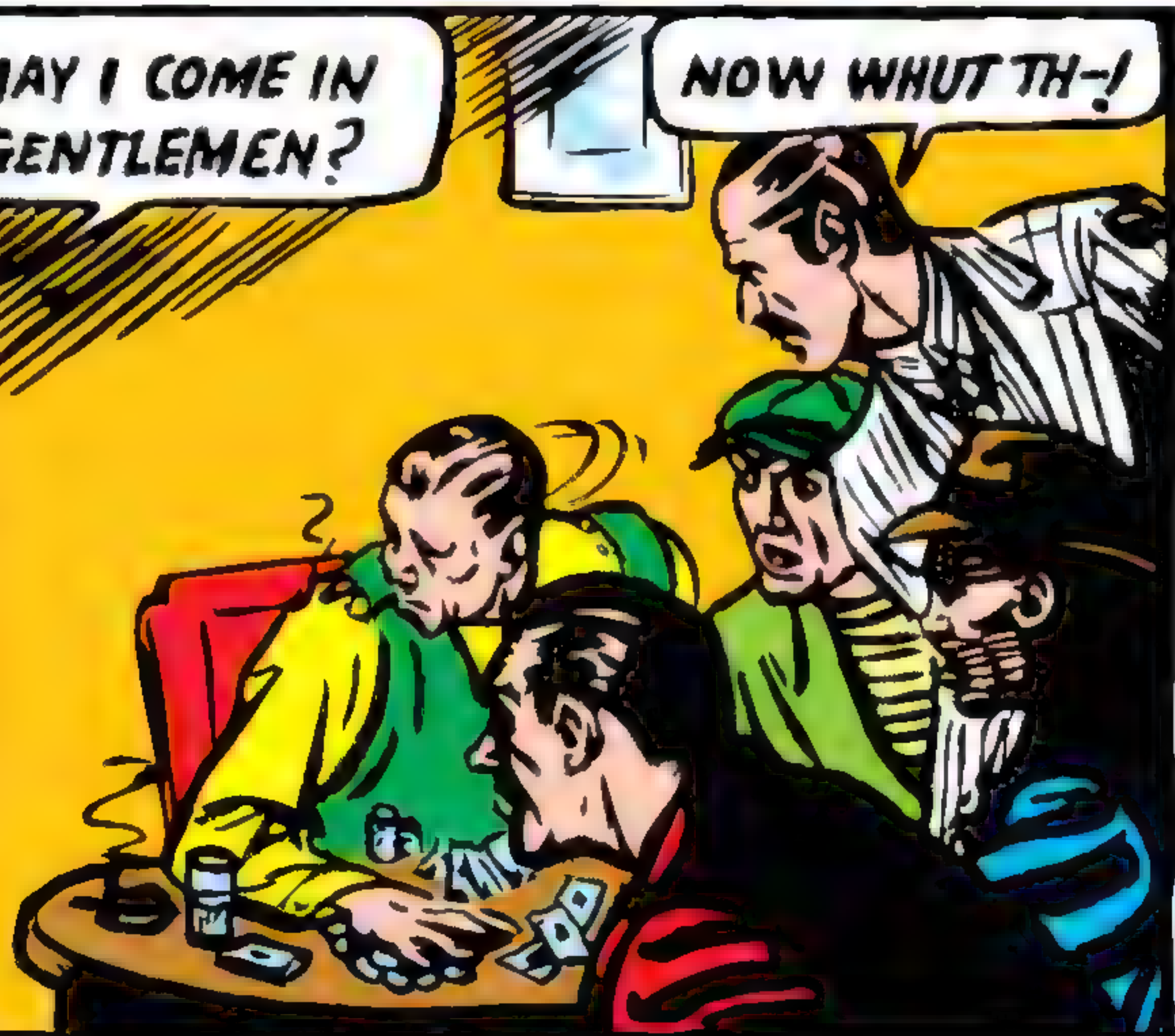


THE THUGS THAT BEAT UP THE PHANTOM REPORTER IN HIS DAYTIME ROLE OF CLUB REPORTER ARE PLAYING POKER IN THE REAR OFFICE OF THEIR NIGHT CLUB--- WHEN SUDDENLY...



MAY I COME IN GENTLEMEN?

NOW WHUT TH-!

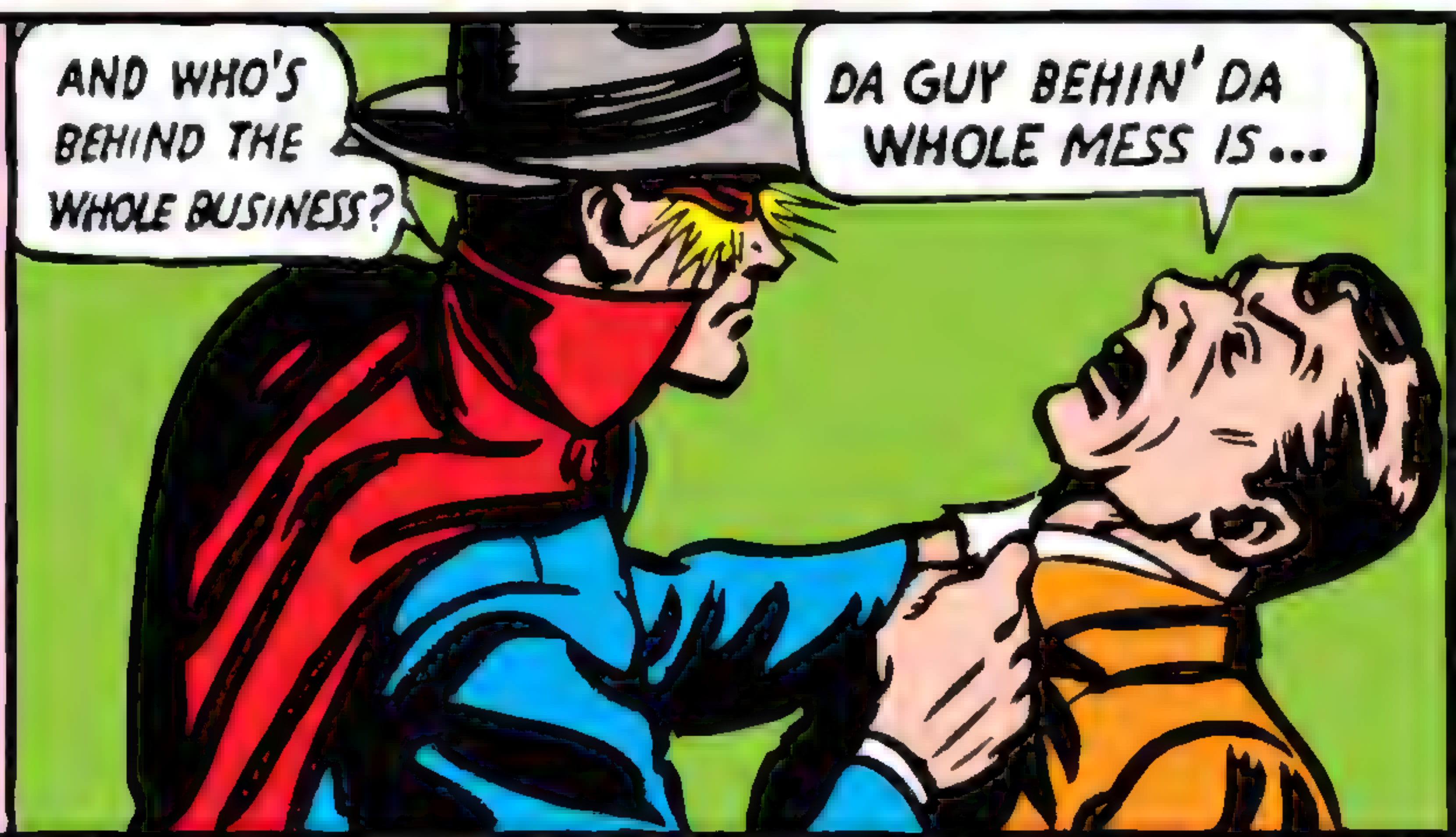




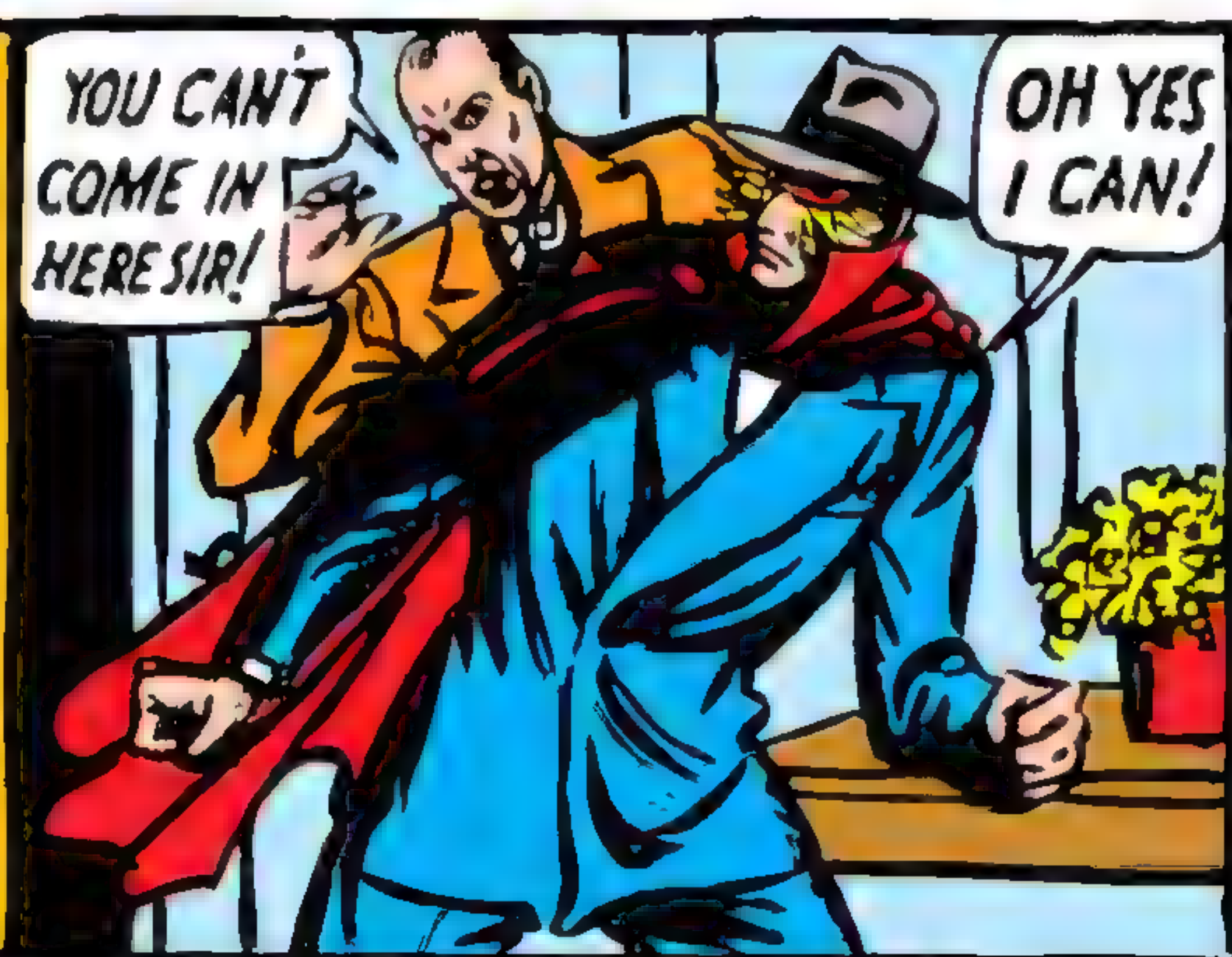
IN FIFTEEN SECONDS THE PHANTOM REPORTER HAS BLASTED ALL THE THUGS INTO OBLIVION! QUICKLY HE GETS A GLASS OF WATER AND PUTS A PILL IN IT AND FORCES THE SOLUTION DOWN THE THROAT OF ONE OF THE THUGS!



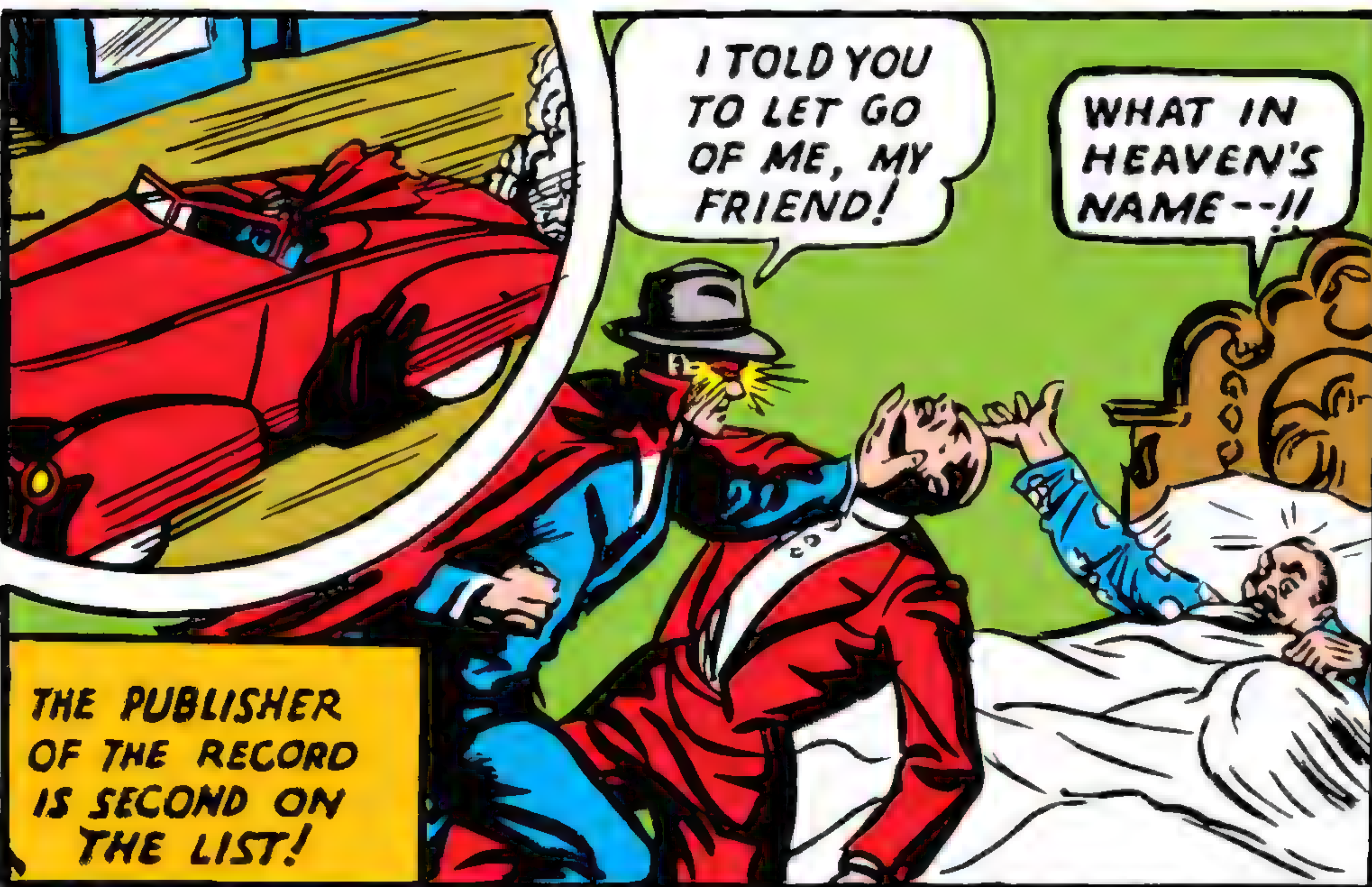
-AND AS THE THUG BEGINS TO COME TO, THE PHANTOM REPORTER ASKS HIM WHO IS BEHIND THE EAST SIDE MURDER MAZE & WHAT IT IS ALL ABOUT-KNOWING THAT THE THUG CAN TELL HIM ONLY THE TRUTH!



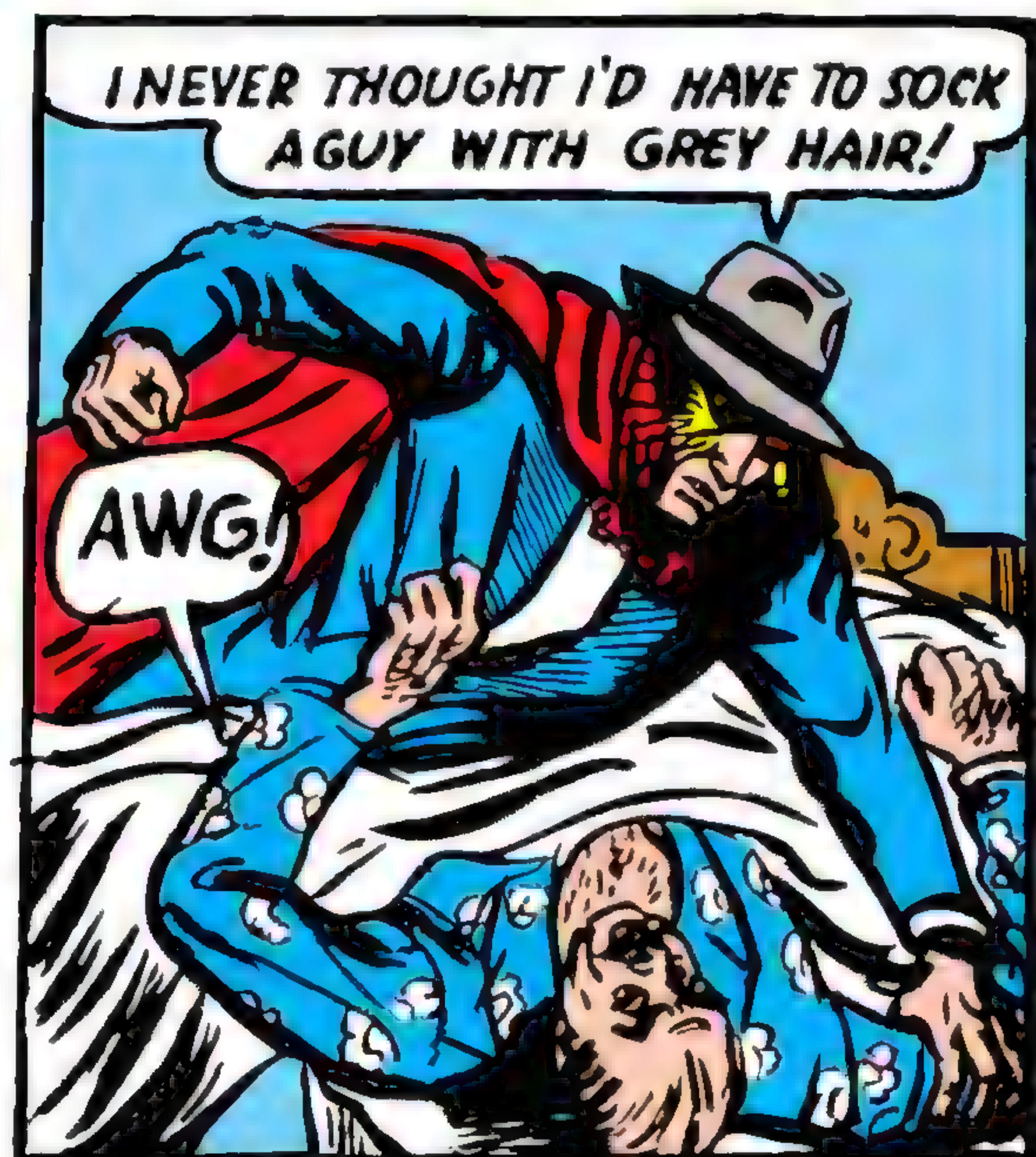
SO, HAVING LEARNED EVERYTHING HE WANTED TO KNOW, THE PHANTOM REPORTER SETS OUT ON A ROUND OF EARLY MORNING SOCIAL CALLS!

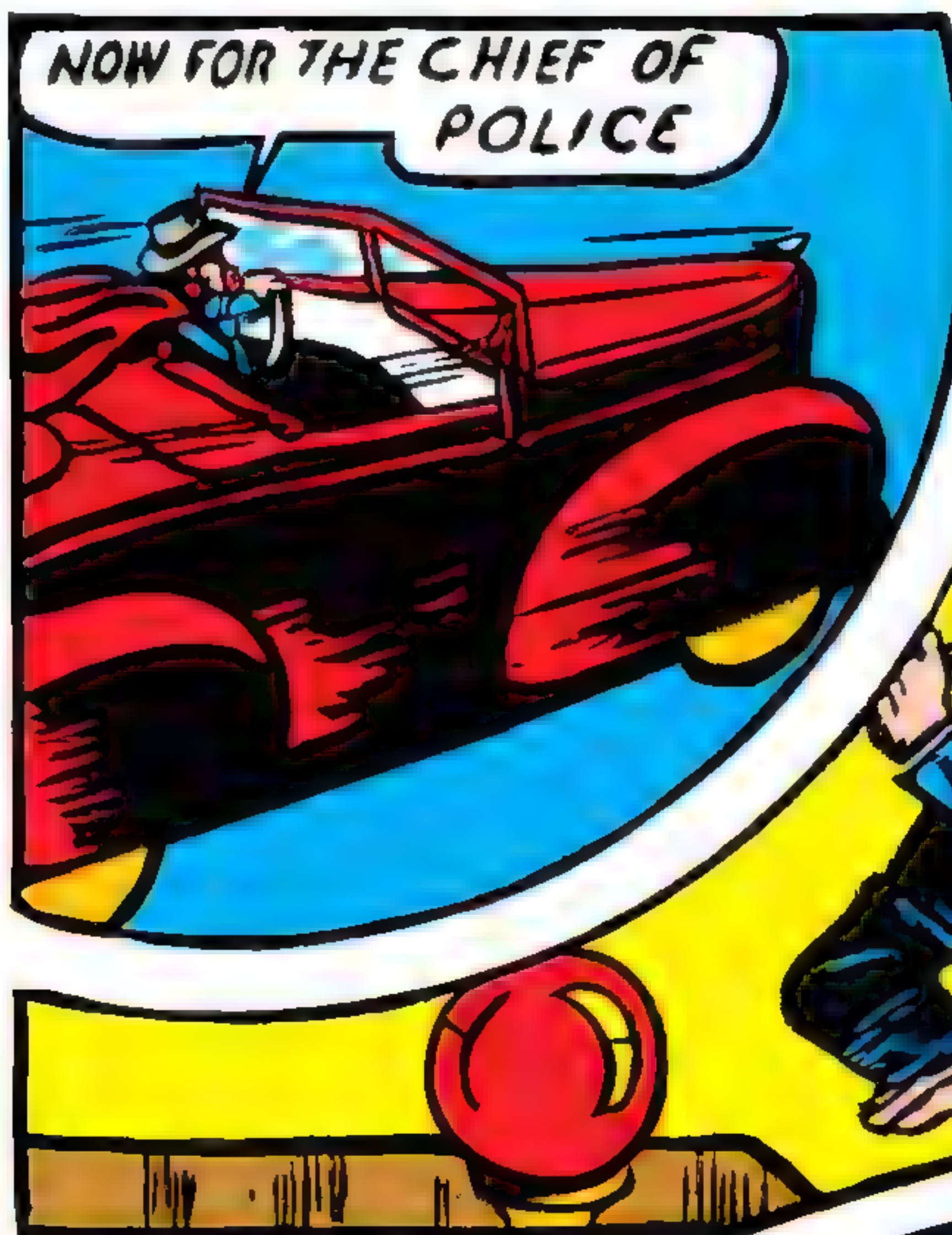


THE PUBLISHER OF THE NEWS-TELEGRAM IS THE FIRST TO BE HONORED!



THE PUBLISHER OF THE RECORD IS SECOND ON THE LIST!





NOW FOR THE CHIEF OF POLICE

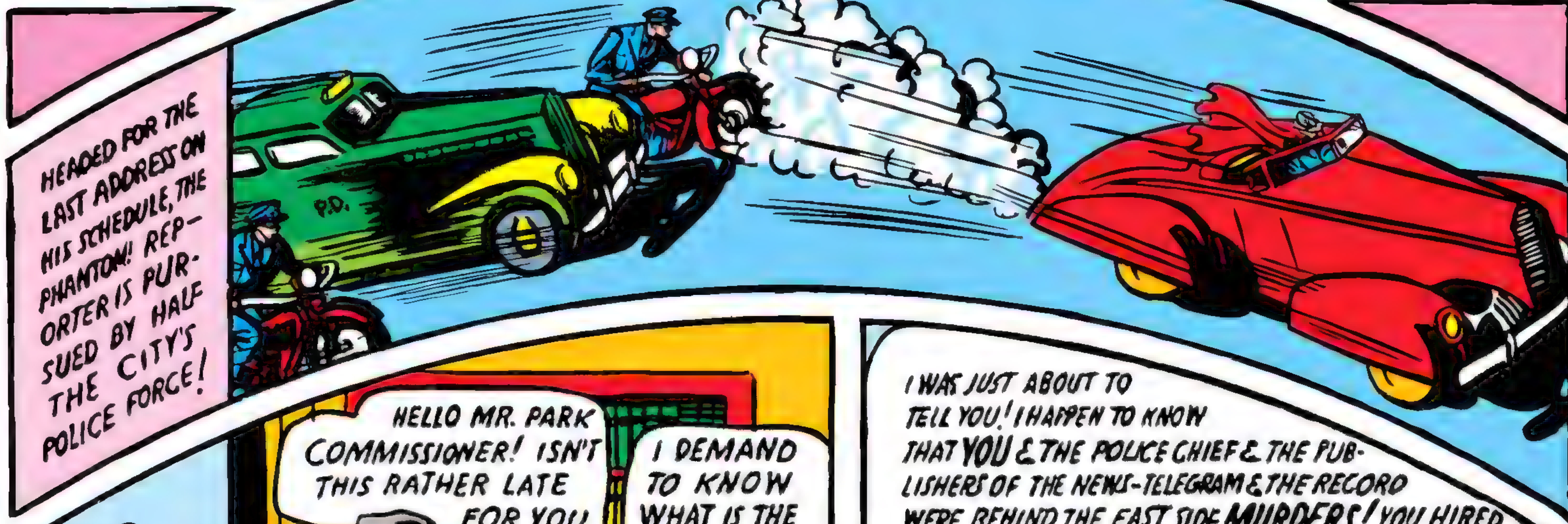


WHAT'S THE GUY THINK THIS IS--HALLOWE'EN?

LISSEN, PAL WHOEVER YUH THINK YUH ARE, I SAID YUH COULDN'T SEE THE CHIEF--



A POLICE CHIEF IS SUPPOSED TO ENFORCE THE LAW, FRIEND -- NOT BLOCK IT!



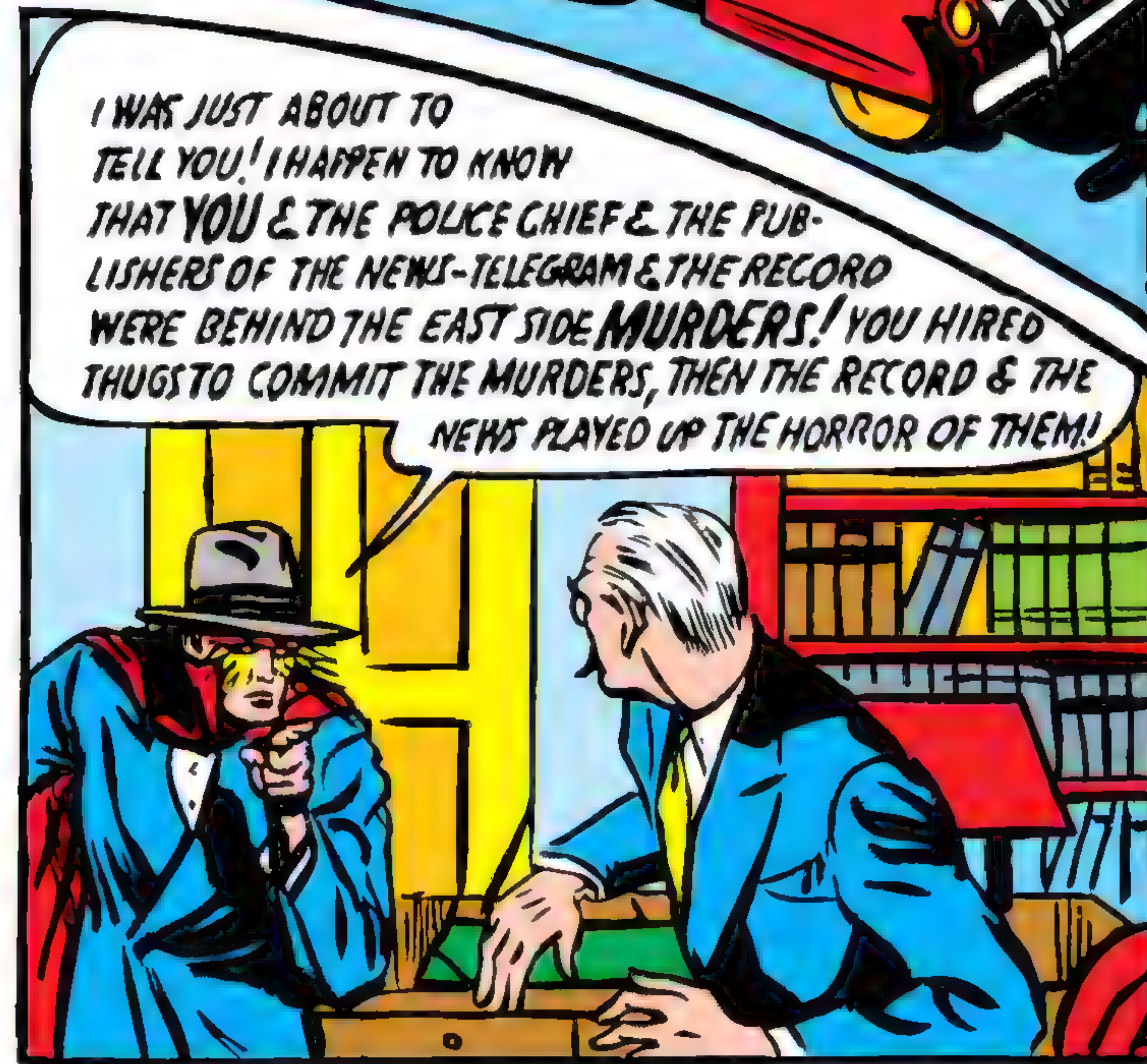
HEADED FOR THE LAST ADDRESS ON HIS SCHEDULE, THE PHANTOM! REPORTER IS PURSUED BY HALF THE CITY'S POLICE FORCE!

EASILY ELUDING THE COPS THE PHANTOM REPORTER MAKES HIS FINAL CALL!



HELLO MR. PARK COMMISSIONER! ISN'T THIS RATHER LATE FOR YOU TO BE UP?

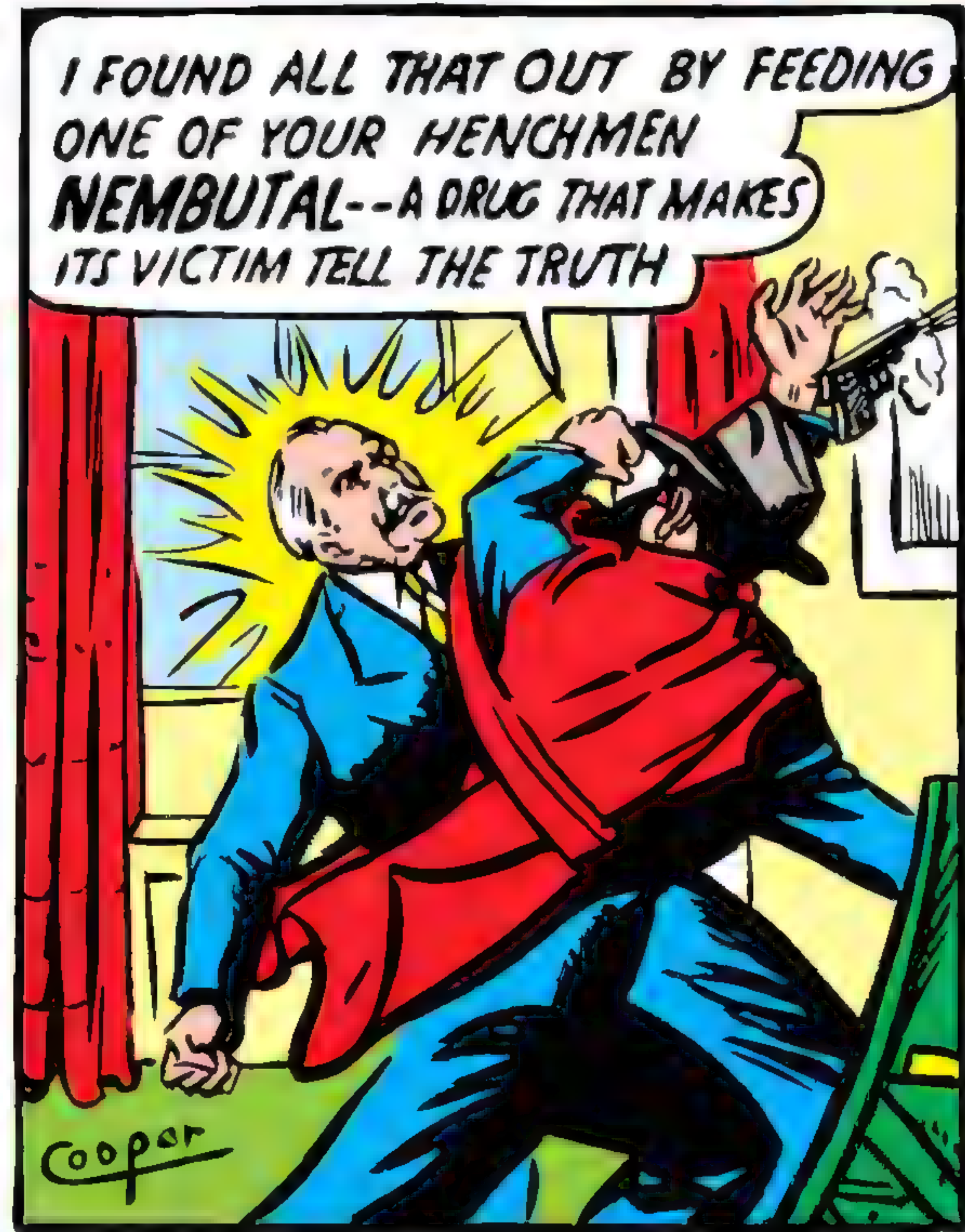
I DEMAND TO KNOW WHAT IS THE MEANING OF THIS!



I WAS JUST ABOUT TO TELL YOU! I HAPPEN TO KNOW THAT YOU & THE POLICE CHIEF & THE PUBLISHERS OF THE NEWS-TELEGRAM & THE RECORD WERE BEHIND THE EAST SIDE MURDERS! YOU HIRED THUGS TO COMMIT THE MURDERS, THEN THE RECORD & THE NEWS PLAYED UP THE HORROR OF THEM!



YOU WANTED ALL THE TENANTS ON THE EAST SIDE TO MOVE OUT, FROM FEAR -- THEN ONE OF YOUR PUBLISHER FRIENDS, WOULD BUY UP THE EAST SIDE CHEAP, AND SELL IT TO YOU AT A GREAT PROFIT FOR A PARK--AND YOU'D ALL SPLIT THE PROFITS!



I FOUND ALL THAT OUT BY FEEDING ONE OF YOUR HENCHMEN NEMBUTAL--A DRUG THAT MAKES ITS VICTIM TELL THE TRUTH

THE NEXT MORNING



ONE OF THE HIRED THUGS CONFESSED EARLY THIS MORNING--SO ONCE AGAIN I PUT YOU ON A CASE, JONES, AND ONCE AGAIN IT'S MYSTERIOUSLY SOLVED!

YES SIR!

THE END

DARING EXTRAS

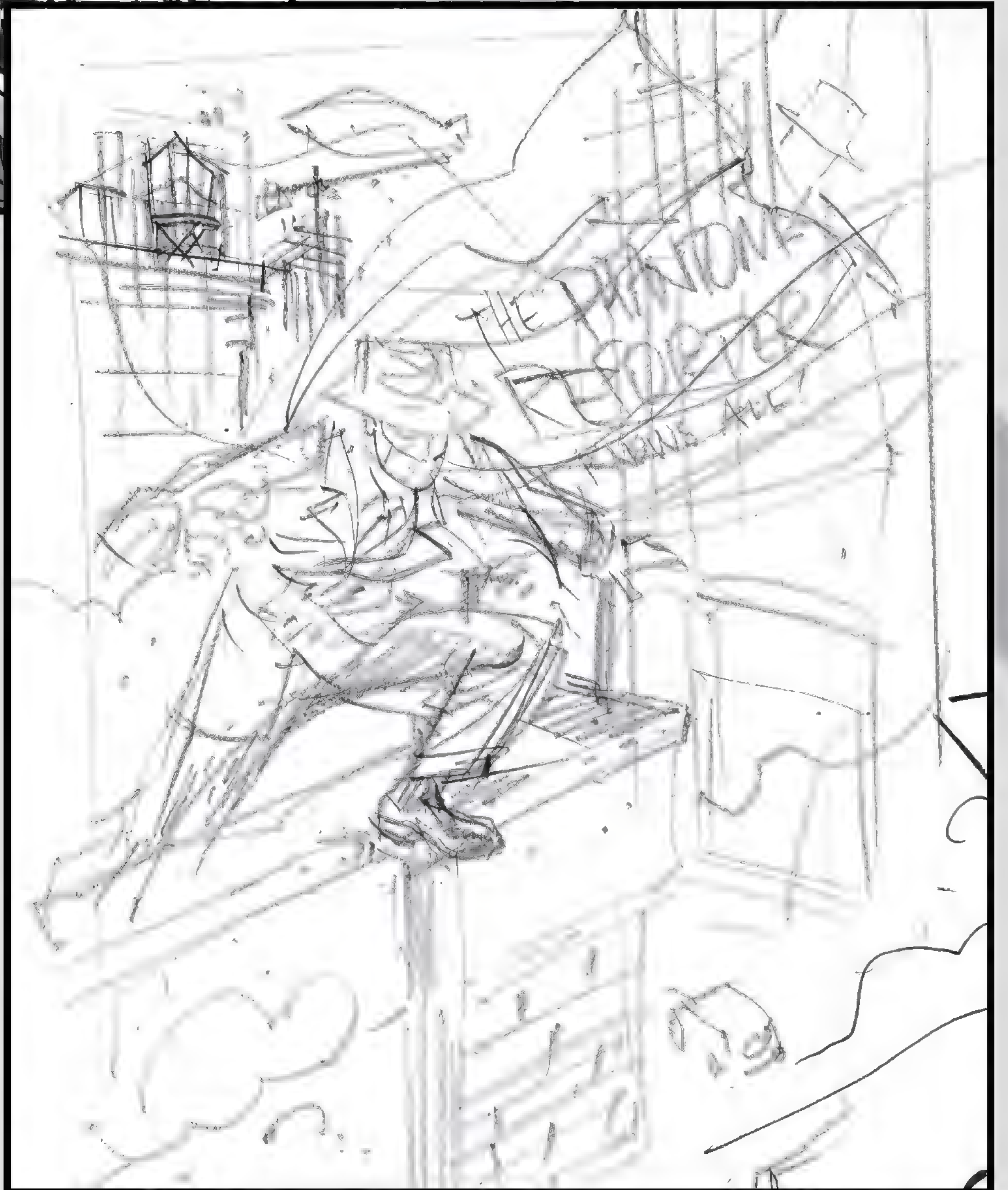
PIN-UP
BY JASON ARMSTRONG AND VAL STAPLES



DARING MYSTERY COMICS 70TH ANNIVERSARY SPECIAL BACKUP FEATURES

DARING EXTRAS

PIN-UP SKETCHES BY JASON ARMSTRONG



CHARACTER STUDIES



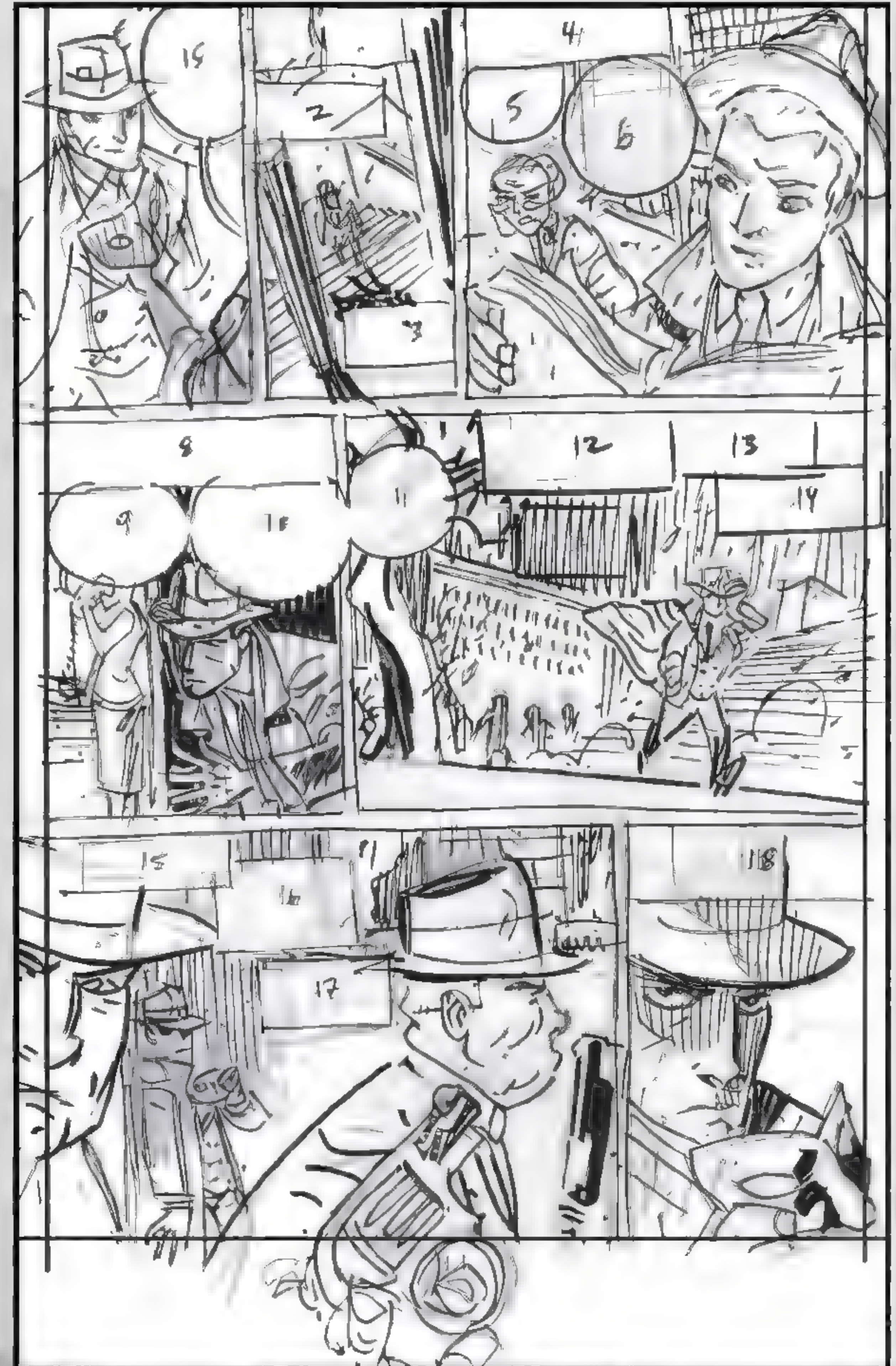
BY JASON ARMSTRONG



DARING EXTRAS

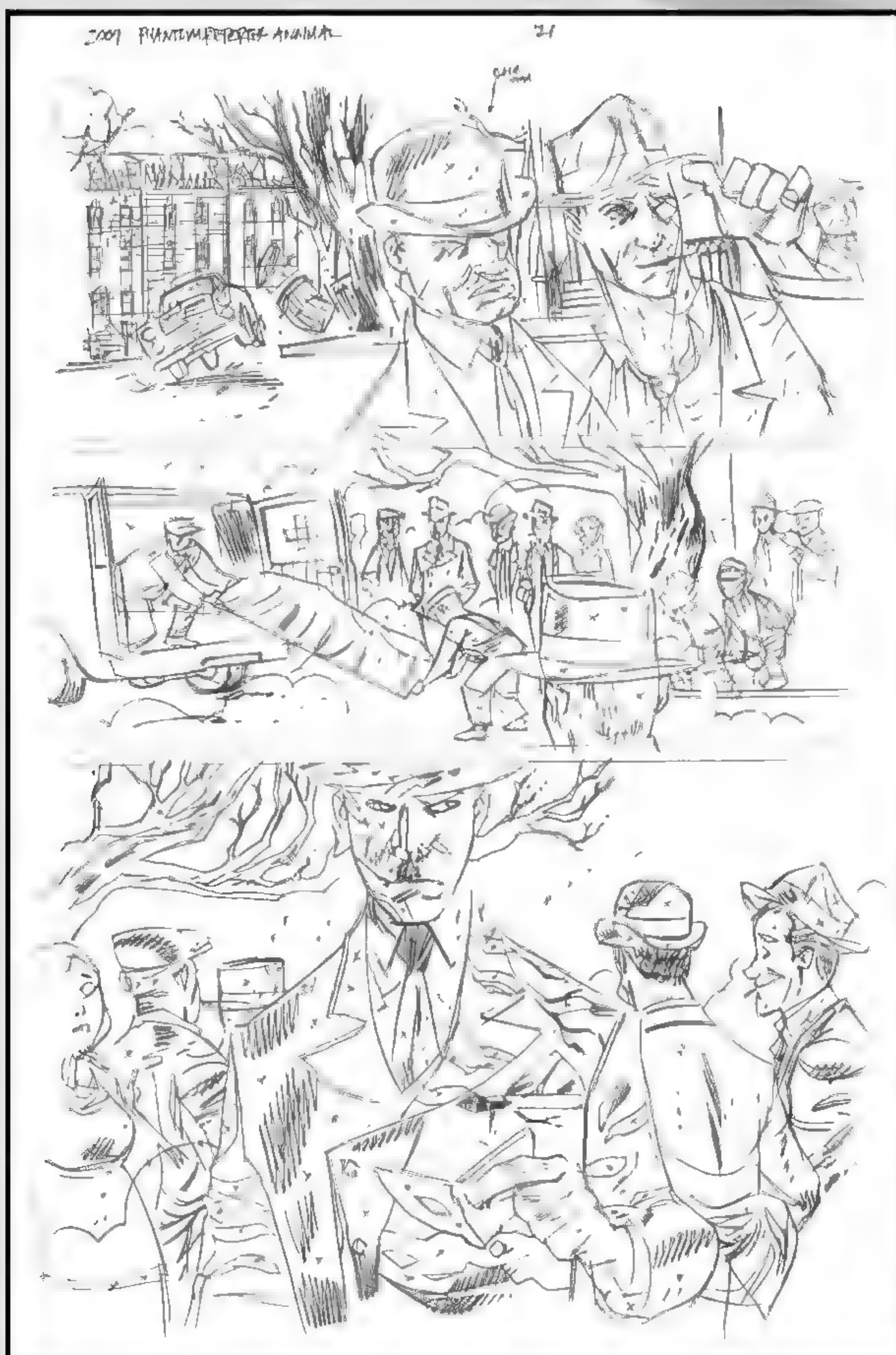
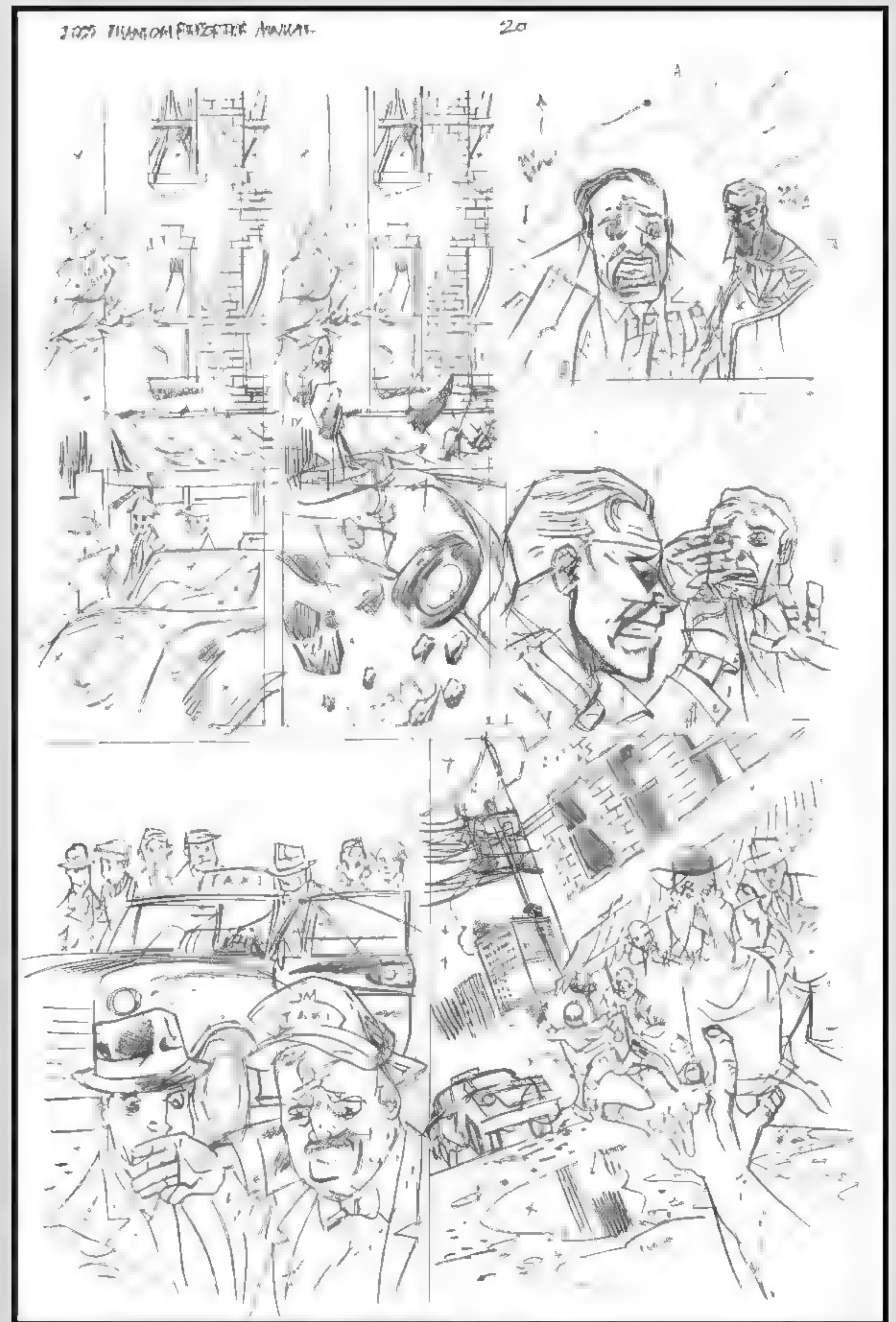
LAYOUTS BY JASON ARMSTRONG

Dick puts on the mask for the 1st time!



DARING EXTRAS

PENCILED PAGES BY JASON ARMSTRONG



DARING EXTRAS

DAVID LISS: WRITING THE REPORTER

What you hold in your hands is my first effort at writing graphic fiction. I'll consider it a success if you have some small fraction of the fun reading it that I had writing it.

For the last ten years I've been writing research-intensive historical novels, but the characters who inhabit them have always been at least a little influenced by my lifelong love of super heroes. In fact, Bill Rosemann, the tireless editor of this book, first contacted me because he saw an affinity between one of my protagonists and Marvel stalwart, Luke Cage. But liking comics and writing them are two different things, and putting this script together has been consistently challenging and exciting.

I don't think I could have found a better character to break me in than The Phantom Reporter. The limited background of the Golden Age hero gave me a relatively free hand to reshape him into a modern figure, and it also gave me a chance to do an origin story – and I love origin stories. The original Phantom Reporter is a sketchy character at best – almost silly in his pure, relentless id. At the same time, for all his broadly painted strokes, he contains the core elements of what is so satisfying about the masked vigilante: a rigid sense of right and wrong, and the power to enforce it. The challenge for me was to work backwards, to create a real, three-dimensional character who would do that

most unlikely of things – put on a mask and risk his life to fight villains – and have it all ring true. I hope it does.

The creative process of writing comics certainly rings true for me. I'm now in the planning stages of my second (currently top secret) project with Marvel, and I'm working on a proposal for an original super hero series I hope to convince someone to take a chance on. The bottom line is I'm hooked, and I plan to keep on writing comics as long as someone is willing to publish them.



*David Liss is the author six novels, most recently *The Devil's Company*. He has five previous best-selling novels: *A Conspiracy of Paper*, winner of the 2000 Edgar Award for Best First Novel, *The Coffee Trader*, *A Spectacle of Corruption*, *The Ethical Assassin* and *The Whiskey Rebels*. Four of these novels, and one of his short stories, are currently in development as film projects. He lives in San Antonio with his wife and children, and can be reached via his web page: davidliss.com, which features his endlessly fascinating and edifying blog.*

DATE

JUNE 08

INVESTIGATOR

DAVID LISS

CASE FILE

MM 001

I was still very new to writing comics when editor Bill Rosemann asked me if I was interested in writing a miniseries about pulp-era characters set in Marvel continuity. Looking back, I'm glad I was new because if I'd understood what a rare and important opportunity this was, I might have been too intimidated to accept. Creating all-new characters that evoked the pulp aesthetic but also felt like real Marvel heroes, and creating a new chapter in the history of the Marvel U. How cool is that?

Over the course of a few weeks, Bill and I hashed out what kinds of characters we wanted for this book. I thought we had some good ideas, but good ideas aren't enough, and a comic book has to look good. Bill proposed a lot of names as he searched for the right artist, and I would have been thrilled to work with any of them, but when he mentioned Patch Zircher, I knew he was the person I wanted on this title. If you are reading this, then you are holding the book in your hands, and so you know why. Mystery Men is, without doubt, one of the best looking comics out there. Period.

Any story set in the New York of the early 1930s should evoke some of the real issues of the period. The '30s were about more than speakeasies, dirigibles and awesome hats, and so we threw in issues of race and gender inequity, poverty and greed, unfair labor practices, and many other gritty realities of the Depression. We also wanted the book to be set firmly in the Marvel U., so keep your eyes peeled for some familiar names and faces.

It was never anything but a blast to work on a project wedding time-honored archetypes, modern sensibilities, awesome art, and a new chapter in Marvel history. Some things went absolutely according to plan, and some evolved organically during the creative process, but the end result is something I feel lucky to have worked on. I hope you enjoy reading it as much as we enjoyed creating it.



The
OP

A lot of the attraction of working on MYSTERY MEN comes from the cast of characters that David Liss has created for the book, a group that satisfies any artist's yearning to draw pulp heroes. With The Operative we have a character that's probably the most representative of all the pulps, the detective (his name is even inspired by Dashiell Hammett's Continental Op). This is the character with clothes that most bring to mind classic noir movies; fedora, suit, black leather shoes. But our Operative is also a jewel thief and cat burglar--and a masked man. Working out a mask that avoids the well-known look of The Spirit and Green Hornet but still functions with a hat, I simply inverted the cut of the mask, leaving the area around the eyes open and the rest of the face concealed. I liked it immediately. In the stories themselves, we added a long dark coat and trimmed him down a few pounds to enhance the style and mood and to match Dennis Piper's suaveness out of costume.

VICTIM
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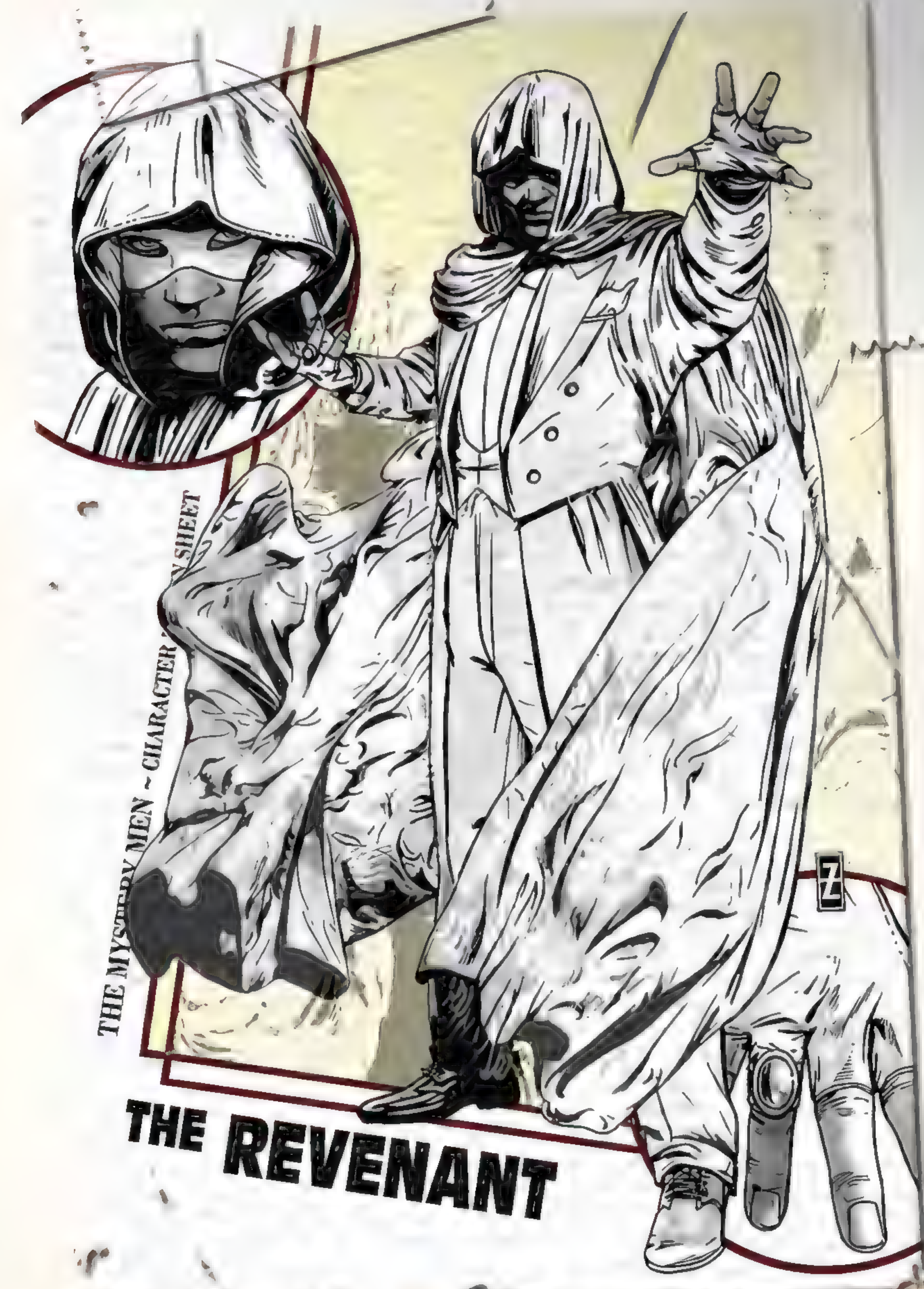
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MYSTERY MEN CHARACTER DESIGNS BY PATCH ZIRCHER

To try and convey



The Revenant's name is derived from English folklore as a kind of ghost or spirit and, initially, he was going to have a ragged, spectral appearance. But as designs for the other Mystery Men emerged it became apparent a ragged look would interfere with the atmosphere we wanted to have surrounding The Surgeon. Instead we found ghostly qualities in his all-white costume and in his manner and abilities, such as his sudden appearances and disappearances, the rolling smoke that appears around him, his hooded cloak, fingerless gloves, and so forth. Ezekiel Wright's costume, as you'll see in upcoming issues, also has roots in the glamour and theatrics of Broadway of the '20s and '30s--his tuxedo, dress shoes, and showy ring are designed to reflect that. So by concentrating on giving The Revenant a separate, individual identity, and by keeping in mind his origin, he developed a look that I now can't imagine him not having.

The OP

VICTIM
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The Surgeon's horrifying origin and modus operandi (getting what he wants out of the bad guys with scalpels and syringes) places him on the edge of being a hero, on the edge of sanity for that matter. We wanted a look that represented that: the scarred tissue around his eyes, the bandages, the ragged and stitched cloak, and gurney restraints for wristbands. The white doctor's coat adds a weird ohill to his look as well. For a color scheme, blood red seemed exactly right for the cloak. And just what's in those glowing green syringes? Don't ask.



THE SURGEON

To try and con



ACHILLES

Achilles underwent a lot of change in development. Initially a mild-mannered young Professor who transforms into a classic Greek warrior, he was to have a Greek helmet, spear, chest plate, and so forth. The spear and helmet never really took and the first designs were appropriate but didn't feel 'pulp.' So we re-imagined his transformation. Armed with a sword and shield, Achilles' armor was replaced with a bold shirt and logo and footballer's trousers. His hairstyle now more Buster Crabbe than historical hero. All in all, a costume influenced by the young, meek Professor's love of history but also the wish-fulfillment of the mighty pulps. He undergoes a transformation into not just a warrior but an adventurer as well.

The OP

Aviatrix, more than any of the character designs, was a collaborative effort between writer, editors, and artist. Because she is a female aviator, I looked to old photos of women pilots through history. They were actually quite the rage in the '20s and '30s and, like Amelia Earhart, several of them made the headlines. Aviatrix began with a jet pack which was later given wings to help differentiate her from the late Dave Steven's popular and much-loved hero, the Rocketeer. Former Editor-in-Chief (and current CCO) Joe Quesada even stepped in, suggesting a fin on her headgear.

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THE MYSTERY MEN - CHARACTER DESIGN SHEET

THE AVIATRIX

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THE MYSTERY MEN - CHARACTER DESIGN SHEET

NOX

Nox is a powerful character of mythic origin who has actual ties to Marvel's past in the pages of Dr. Strange. While she retained the color scheme of those earlier appearances, most everything else about her was changed to make her increasingly sinister and vampish. She flaunts social convention with her sensuous, sexy attire and, frankly, I can imagine her not bothering with clothes at all. However...her dresses are modified exaggerations of some of the dresses I found in old fashion books of the '30s and '40s.

DATE: SEPTEMBER 14

INVESTIGATOR: LISS/ZIRCHER/ROSEMAN

CASE FILE: MM 005

All creative projects end up different than they were originally conceived, and that's far more true of collaborative efforts like comic books than solo efforts like novels. When I started working on *Mystery Men*, it was my first multi-issue project for Marvel, and while I had a good sense of where I wanted it to go, the final product was far more realized and vivid and exciting to work on than I could have imagined. Thanks to invaluable and insightful editorial guidance from Bill Rosemann and Tom Brevoort, Dave Sharpe's period-perfect lettering, Andy Troy's dynamic and evocative coloring and, of course, Patch Zircher's brilliant art, *Mystery Men* became a living, breathing creation that I'm intensely proud to have been part of.

It is always exciting to create something new, but I think there is a special pleasure that comes from creating something new in a world already well-established. Working our characters into the murky pre-WWII years of Marvel's history gave us a chance both to give context to a future and explain a past. I know I especially loved the opportunity to inject modern Marvel sensibilities into older pulp archetypes. Here's to the opportunity to return to the scene of the crime.

David Liss

What can I say about working on this project... working with David, Bill, and Andy? They're all consummate professionals, talented individuals, and a pleasure to work with. Pulp stories have always held a huge attraction for me -- from catching black-and-white Flash Gordon serials on Saturday mornings to discovering James Bama's cover art on Doc Savage paperbacks to watching the great, classic noir movies. Making these stories -- well -- this is about *Mystery Men*, so I'll put it out there like an old song from the era: "Heaven, I was in heaven and my heart beat so that I could hardly speak."

Patch Zircher

While every project holds its own unique surprises and memories, *Mystery Men* was a true dream. A special thanks to Joe Quesada and Dan Buckley for their faith, and to Tom Brevoort, who provided key insights and a steady hand throughout the entire process. Most of all thanks to David, Patch, Andy and Dave for creating magic... and to all of you for joining us on this dark and wonderful ride.

Bill Rosemann

MYSTERY MEN #5 AFTERWORD

DATE:

INVESTIGATOR:

CASE FILE:

MYSTERY MEN 1932



MYSTERY MEN TEAM SKETCH BY PATCH ZIRCHER

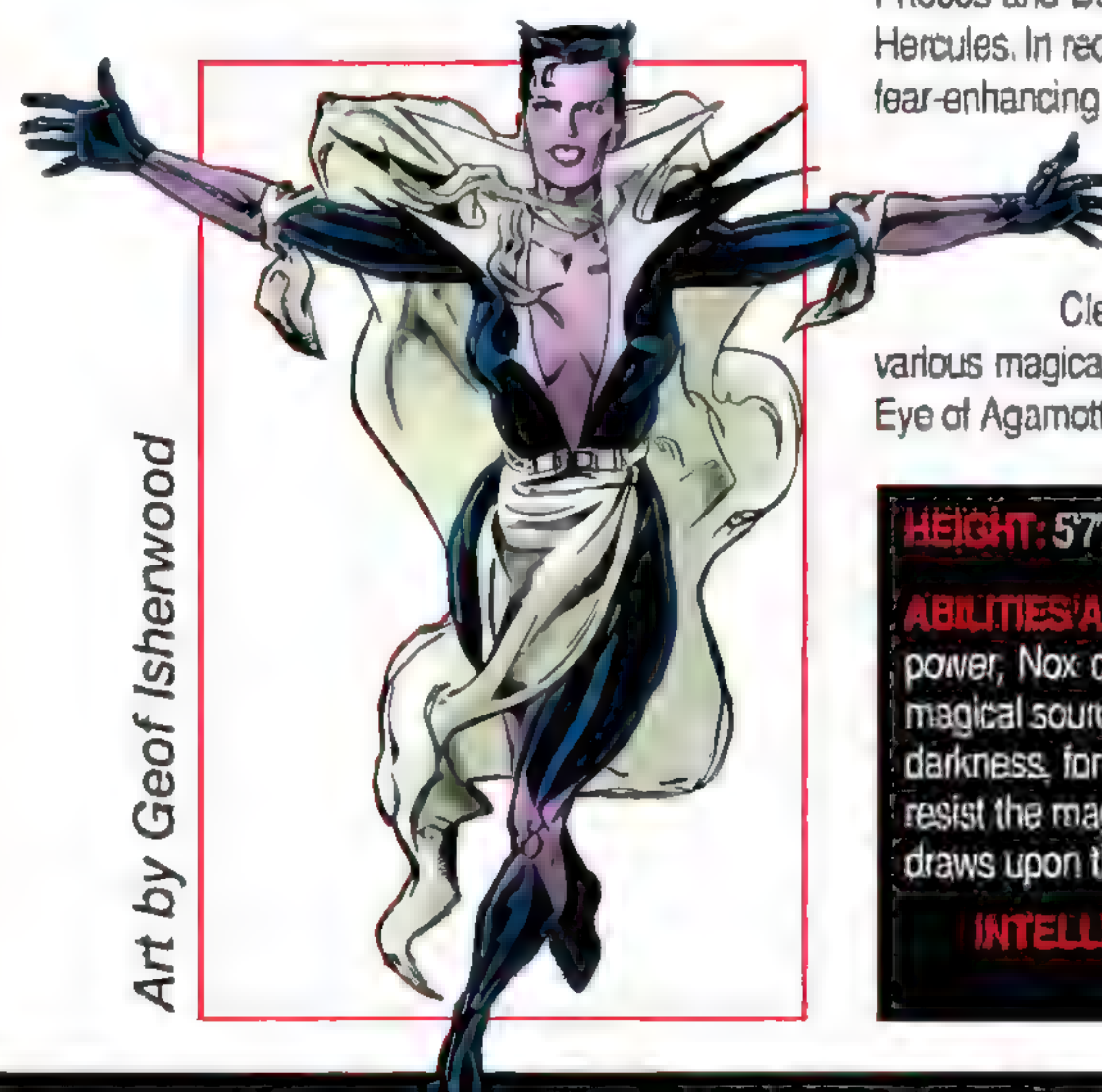
NOX

REAL NAME: Possibly Nyx
ALIASES: Night, Lady Nox; impersonated Aphrodite
IDENTITY: No dual identity
OCCUPATION: Goddess of the night
CITIZENSHIP: Unrevealed
PLACE OF BIRTH: Unrevealed

KNOWN RELATIVES: Deimos, Phobos (sons, deceased), Ophion, Eurynome (parents), several unidentified gods and goddesses (spawn)
GROUP AFFILIATION: Fear Lords
EDUCATION: Unrevealed
FIRST APPEARANCE: Dr. Strange: Sorcerer Supreme #31 (1991)

HISTORY: Nox (Greek for night) is one of the seven known Fear Lords, mysterious other-dimensional beings who thrive on the purest forms of fear. While the other Fear Lords require fear for sustenance, Nox uses fear as an aesthetic pleasure, and inspires fear in others via complex schemes. The daughter of Greek Titans Ophion and Eurynome, Nox spawned numerous gods and goddess that became associated with negative aspects of life. Many years ago, Nox posed as the goddess Aphrodite and conceived two sons after an encounter with the war god Ares, naming them

Phobos and Deimos (Greek for "fear" and "terror"); both sons would later perish in battle with Thor and Hercules. In recent years, she secretly influenced the Microverse scientist Psycho-Man in developing his fear-enhancing device and manipulated the demon Thog in using Nightmare Boxes to cause universal madness. Nox joined the other Fear Lords (except Straw Man) in a plot to drive humanity to the brink of madness. Nox attacked mystics Dr. Strange, Clea and Rintrah, drawing upon the world's fear to resurrect Phobos and Deimos. Nox prepared to kill Clea and Rintrah, but the heroes regrouped and slew her sons. Furious, Nox called upon various magical sources to enfold and slay the heroes in night's shadow, but Strange bathed her in the Eye of Agamotto's mystical light, weakening her. Nox fled to avoid capture.



Art by Geof Isherwood

HEIGHT: 5'7" **WEIGHT:** 270 lbs. **EYES:** Black **HAIR:** Black

ABILITIES/ACCESSORIES: An apparently immortal and extradimensional sorceress of immense power, Nox can monitor other dimensions and mentally influence others by drawing upon various magical sources and entities. She can disguise her shape, travel across dimensions, cast a pervasive darkness, form the deadly Sword of Night to slay souls, create the ensnaring Tendrils of Night, and resist the magic of others. Though Nox is vulnerable to light sources, her power increases when she draws upon the fears of others.

INTELLIGENCE: 6 **STRENGTH:** 3 **SPEED:** 3/7 (Nox is a teleporter) **DURABILITY:** 6
ENERGY PROJECTION: 3 **FIGHTING SKILLS:** 4



INSTRUCTIONS: FOLD DOUBLE PAGE SPREAD. Cut along the fold line. Do not cut along the outer edges.



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ALL BLEED ART MUST EXTEND TO SOLID LINE

Book **Mystery Men**

Issue **3**

Story Page **9**

Line Up Page #



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ARTIST MUST SET TO 100%

CONTAIN ALL ARTWORK



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Collecting *Mystery Men #1-5* and *Daring Mystery Comics 70th Anniversary Special* —
written by David Liss, and illustrated by Patch Zircher and Jason Armstrong.



T+

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